

**American Baptist Churches of Nebraska
Nebraska Region Annual Meeting
Saturday, January 22, 2022
ZOOM Meeting**

Meeting called to order at 10:06

Attendees: Robin Stoops, Greg Mamula, LaVonna Cline, Bev Pacas, Lorlea Mees, Craig Erickson, Brian Jenkins, Brad Pope, Orin Clinger, Jane Gangwish, Clint Walker Taylor Shippy, Robert Molby, Joy Martinez Marshall, Becky Clinger, Rick Wheatley and Linda Wheatley, Steve Wisthoff, Bob Fairchild, Traci Gilmer, Sandra Goodwater, Doug Larsen

Welcome: Lavonna Cline opened the meeting with prayer.

Review of Minutes: Bob Fairchild made the motion to accept the minutes. Brad Pope seconded motion passed.

Finance: Bob Fairchild reviewed the 2021 financial report, 2021 was a good year financially, the region was only \$469.00 over budget for the entire year of 2021. Our investments, this year, despite drawing out funds, increased 1.244 percent over the past year. The PPE loans, that the region received, reduced the amount that was required to be pulled from the endowment.

There has been an anonymous gift of \$23,000 that was given to Moses Merrill Camp and Conference, that will be used to remodel the Weaver. We also have a gift coming in 2022 from the Laten Estate, although we are unsure of the amount of the gift at this time.

ABMEN: Brad Pope has been doing some fundraising for obtain new garage doors for the maintenance shop at camp, the doors were installed a week ago. However, the doors that arrived did not have windows and we are waiting on the company to bring the correct doors and have them reinstalled. The ABMEN had the large tractor taken in for complete refurbishment and the hydraulics, transmission and brakes were all replaced and serviced. The cost for the total refurbishment came below the amount of donation the earmarked donation. ABMEN is planning to create a work week and a retreat combined so that men can come in 2-3 days early for the work portion and stay for the retreat.

Bev Pacas expressed her appreciation for the work done and the ongoing work that the ABMEN complete. She also added her appreciation for the regular crew of Thursday volunteers from ABMEN.

ABWM: In 2021 ABWM held their yearly women's conference at Moses Merrill with Dr. Lachaka Askew as the speaker. National ABWM held their meetings virtually on June 19th and then held a virtual 70th anniversary celebration on July 17. The October retreat was

organized by Beatrice FBC and Susan Schwartz with LaRose Karr, the current national Missions Chairperson for National ABWM as the speaker. Our project netted 27 sewing kits and 9 boxes of additional fabric and notions for Bethel Neighborhood Center Immigrant Sewing Project as well as raising \$1,614.73 for the lighting in the sewing classroom. June 3-5 is the annual conference for 2022 and will be held at Moses Merrill.

Moses Merrill: Bev Pacas, director, announced that the camp has just hired Steve Combs as the facilities manager for the camp. His wife, Cindy Combs will be the kitchen manager and cook for the camp. Steve and Cindy will be moving out to camp before the end of the month.

The 2022 Summer camp theme is "Passport to Peace" based on Philippians 4:6 and registration is open. Moses Merrill does intend to hire two additional staff members aged 16 and up for camp this summer. Rack cards, for the camp, should have arrived at every church at this time. Building Bridges Campaign: Cabin 3 is under construction and when it is completed Moses Merrill will have half of all the cabins done. Bricks are placed in the Memorial Garden and with another order to be placed in March, we will add more bricks this spring. Moses Merrill is planning an open house on May 7, 2022. Registration will be available that day for camp, tours of the memorial garden, the new stargazer deck and an appreciation dinner for members of 2300 team.

Robin Stoops: Robin presented the nominating report included in the meeting documents. The position for the board of ABCUSA is open as we are waiting for ABCUSA to determine who will be chosen from Nebraska for their board. Nebraska Baptist Churches has submitted three names for their board.

Traci Gilmer noted that we Caleb Cornelius should be removed from the nominating committee document as he is no longer hired personnel in the region.

Bill Prather moved to accept the slate of officers as presented and Traci Gilmer seconded. The slate of officers was approved as corrected.

Robin Stoops reported on current pastoral support in the region. Prairie Pastors Conference is scheduled in March of 2022 and in the fall a pastor's retreat is planned at Moses Merrill. The region has received grants for a rest and relaxation retreat for the pastors. One will be scheduled for Western Nebraska in April and will be located in Ogallala. Pastors will be encouraged to bring spouses and there will be worship and workshops. In the late summer/early fall the same type of retreat will be scheduled for the eastern section of Nebraska.

The second part of the pastoral care includes helping churches work through discernment. The region had hoped to bring Ruth Haley Barton to the region but she is not available in 2022 so the region will be taking ten pastors to Chicago in July to a workshop she is leading

“Discerning God’s Will”. After the retreat, those that attended will come back and put together mini-workshops for our churches.

Thursday, January 26, 2022 there is a book study for pastors. The Great Commission Fellowship, a group for American Baptist pastors, has had workshops with Todd Bollinger, who has written “Canoeing the Mountains” with a discussion on a ZOOM call last fall, has now written a book called “Tempered Resilience.” There is an upcoming workshop with this book and the region/pastors will have an opportunity to discuss it prior to the event.

There are three churches looking for pastors. Valley is looking for a full time pastor, Pastor Kyle Bendorf has resigned from FBC Fairbury and the church in Hastings is in transition. The Nebraska region is helping Sand Hills Bible Church in Dunning, Nebraska with a fee based pastor search.

Robin Stoops, Greg Mamula and Bev Pacas all took a class in fundraising and are putting together workshops for local churches to do a better job of thanking and be took a class in fundraising.. putting together workshop for local church to do a better job of thanking people and sharing mission more clearly.

Robin Stoops is headed to Washington D.C. with two Chin pastors to preach at a church in Maryland and then on Tuesday are meeting with Ben Sasse to encourage him to support the bill for Burma. Currently we have 17 churches that are Hill Tribe in our region. In the last year the military staged a coup and took over the country. At this time over 100 pastors have been killed and many family members of our churches are living in the jungle because their homes have been destroyed. On December 26, 2021 several hill tribes churches got together and did a fund raiser for Burma and raised more than \$15,000.00. Currently there is a bill before congress to provide humanitarian aid and sanction the military that Robin Stoops and the Chin pastors will be advocating for.

The churches from the Hill Tribe communities are generously supporting the churches as they are establishing churches in the communities in which they live.

On January 30, 2022, Robin Stoops will be headed to Kodiak, Alaska. Johnny Walker, the Kodiak director, has hired the region to help them retool their mission and ministry to help them become better connected to the regions in the U.S.

Robin Stoops closed the meeting in prayer

Respectfully submitted,

Nola Crooks
ABC Nebraska Secretary

ABC NE Region Leadership Team Meeting

April 2, 2022

Gibbon Baptist Church

Present: Craig Erickson, Orin Clinger, Brad Pope, Lorella Meas, Gangwish, Bev Pacas, Robin Stoops, Greg Mamula, Clint Walker. Via Zoom, Robert Fairchild, Brian Jenkins, Cassandra Nelson

Opening devotion by Craig Erickson

Review of **Minutes** from November 13, 2021.

--Correction to Hasting NE plumber information

--Jane Ganwish moves to accept as edited, Orin Clinger seconded.

--Unanimous approval

Review of **Finances**--Bob Fairchild

--17,000 Region Deficit

--10,000 Camp deficit

Occupancy, insurance, utilities for region is higher than normal. Region has installed new Nest thermostats to better control heat/air settings. As a result March billing cycle went down by \$400.

Investments are growing. \$1,153,834.58 balance.

UM giving is down 37% for the year to date. Churches are probably behind for new year.

The Layton estate is still in probate and the interest gifts are lower than expected.

MMCCC--Bev Pacas

-Summer Camp-Philippians Theme. Clayton Wilson will be summer camp coordinator. Still hiring summer staff. Half of last year's staff are returning. No applications for support staff yet.

--March youth retreat, good turnout. First time in three years due to flood and COVID. 30 students, 6 making first time commitments.

--LIT in February was a good event and we look forward to using them soon.

--FEB 7, Steve Combs became the facility manager. Cindy Combs will work in office and help cook.

--Steve is working on cabin 3 and we need a licensed plumber to finish the job

--Nitrates are lowering. Long discussion regarding nitrate levels and how to correct them. No action is necessary at this time.

--weaver hall electrician says our current electric power box can hold any updates. There is a need to clean up the box itself. A general contractor will come to give a rough estimate for any updates

especially bathrooms. Plumbing and sewer issues 100' from Weaver Hall.

--Open House at camp May 7, 2022. 2300 team luncheon

ABMen of Nebraska—Brad Pope

-planning summer July 22-23 conference—theme of discipleship. Hoping to invite people to come early to work on project around camp before conference.

-ABMen purchased and installed insulated shop doors. Nearly paid for.

-lots of projects to do at camp

ABC USA General Board—Orin Clinger

-Orin is new member of the ABC USA General Board.

-New impact of COVID19 taskforce.

-Mission Summit in 2023 will be in San Juan, Puerto Rico

-New Anti-racism task force to discern equality work.

-search team developed for new General Secretary

-explanation of mission partnerships

Executive Minister Report—Robin Stoops

-\$25,000 grant for rest and reflection in April for pastors, to include trip with Ruth Haley Barton in September. An eastern Rest and Retreat event to be scheduled in the fall.

-Region Expo in October 14-15, 2022 at MMCCC. Keynote speaker, worship, pig roast, corn boil, food trucks, pumpkins etc.

-Ascent Ministries: new home mission society to focus on evangelism and discipleship. Asking for a \$5,000 commitment to join. We will need to communicate this new relationship well with our churches. Motion to take \$5,000 from investments-Jane Gangwish motion, Orin Clinger seconded. Unanimously agreed.

-Burmese Advocacy—Summit for International Religious Freedom in June. Bringing refugees to the event.

-Burma Act 2021—set to leave committee on Wednesday for a vote. 8,000 signatures collected for humanitarian aid for victims of the junta.

-The 2018 Ford Escapes driven by Region staff have done well and trade in values are high. A question was raised if region should trade them in for newer models. Board agreed to look into the matter. Craig Erickson agreed to visit the same Anderson Ford dealer in Lincoln the original cars were purchased to ascertain feasibility of trading.

-With Orin Clinger shifting from Camp Team to ABC USA Rep should we look for a new member?

-Judson Baptist Church may be closing soon. Might give up to \$100,000 to camp. Board agreed to draft a large gift acceptance policy.

Submitted by Greg Mamula, Associate Executive Minister

**American Baptist Churches of Nebraska
Leadership Team Meeting
Saturday, August 19, 2022
ABC Nebraska Region Office
Omaha, Nebraska**

Meeting called to order at 10:00

Attendees: Robin Stoops, LaVonna Cline, Bev Pacas, Lorlea Mees, Craig Erickson, Traci Gilmer, Brian Jenkins, Brad Pope, Orin Clinger, Zau Sam,

Bob Fairchild, Clint Walker attended by ZOOM

Welcome: LaVonna Cline opened the meeting with a devotion. Orin Clinger opened with prayer.

Review of Minutes: Brad Jenkins motioned to approve, second from Traci Gilmer, minutes approved.

Finance: Robin Stoops reported we are \$4000 to the positive on the region budget.

Received the first Layton check for 25K on end of July. Estimate is \$100K a year. Robin hopes that we not use the endowment but instead use the Layton funds,

Clint Walker asked where the Layton funds are listed in interest income. 4750,

Camp finances – there are accounts receivable still pending with camp and conference till bring in funds for camp and conference
Added facilities person and raised salaries out of necessity
Cost of everything has increased.

Investment report: Down for the endowment about 180K,

MISSION REPORT:

Orin Clinger – our mission coordinator provided a recap from the ABCUSA meeting at Green Lake.

MOSES MERRILL CAMP/CONFERENCE:

Bev Pacas reported that camp was successful for the summer and that they had a positive summer. She was especially rewarded as she processed the exit interviews for each of the counselors.

Continued issues for the camp include the water system and the testing. Bev intends to hire a new person for the position of part time year round Program Coordinator.

ABMEN:

ABMEN reported that they continue to work on camp and there is a regular Thursday group that comes to the camp to work on camp projects.

ABWM

Lavonna Cline reported that ABWM had a successful summer conference and are currently planning their fall retreat.

Traci Gilmer noted that ABWM of Nebraska elected new officers at the Summer Conference and Susan Howell is the new ABWM Nebraska president.

Executive Minister Report

Robin Stoops reported on the current status of the region.

Following the report of the region, Robin Stoops, Greg Mamula and Bev Pacas departed the meeting.

The board went into executive session to discuss personnel matters at 11:50 a.m.

Discussion followed regarding the direction of the Executive Board for replacement of Robin Stoops.

Regarding interim leadership discussion centered around choosing interim leadership. Following the discussion a motion was made to look outside the region for interim leadership for the region during the transition period. Motion was made by Brian Jenkins and seconded by Traci Gilmer to go with interim leadership from outside the region during the selection process.

Orin Clinger motioned that we increase the pay for Greg Mamula with an additional \$500 per month during this interim time period, from the period of Robin Stoop's departure from the region. Motion seconded by Traci Gilmer and motion passed.

Lavonna Cline will be updating the region with the information following the board meeting.

The executive board went out of executive session to discuss personnel matters at 12:35

Meeting adjourned with prayer

**American Baptist Churches of Nebraska
Leadership Team Meeting
Friday – November 18, 2022
Camp Moses Merrill
Linwood, Nebraska**

Attendees: Steve Wisthoff, Jane Gangwish, LaVonna Cline, Bev Pacas, Lorlea Mees, Traci Gilmer, Brian Jenkins, Brad Pope, Orin Clinger, Clint Walker

Friday Evening: The Leadership Team began the evening with reflection and worship led by Rev. Steve Wisthoff. The team then engaged in an exercise to develop relationships between the team members.

The team then reviewed the upcoming slate of leadership for 2023.

**American Baptist Churches of Nebraska
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Attendees: Steve Wisthoff, Jane Gangwish, LaVonna Cline, Bev Pacas, Lorlea Mees, Traci Gilmer, Brian Jenkins, Brad Pope, Orin Clinger, Bob Fairchild, Clint Walker
Craig Erickson joined by Zoom.

Steve Wisthoff opened the day with a devotional.

Brad Pope motioned to approve the minutes from the August 20, 2022 Leadership Team Meeting, Jane Gangwish seconded. Motion passed.

Bob Fairchild presented the current year budget information.

Greg Mamula reviewed the United Mission Giving process and the effect giving through UM has on the region.

Clint Walker moved that we approve the financial report. Traci Gilmer seconded. Motion Passed.

Jane Gangwish moved that we create a new line item for search committee and move the funds, created by reducing the expenses associated with the Associate Exec by 50%.

Lavonna amended the motion to designate the amount to \$30,000.00

Brad Pope seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Brad Pope moved that we accept the budget for the region, with the amendments. Bob Fairchild seconded. Motion approved.

Camp Budget: Bev Pacas presented the information about the camp budget.

Clint Walker moved that we approve the camp budget. Brian Jenkins seconded. Motion passed.

Mission: Orin Clinger reported on the most recent meetings in Pennsylvania of ABCUSA. Mission Summit is scheduled for June 23-25, 2023 and registration will open before the end of 2022.

Special Presentation: Jane Gangwish presented regarding Kodiak Baptist Mission and it's connection to our region. Jane made an appeal for the ministry, they are experiencing impacts to the costs of the ministry and have a greater need for donations at this time. Jane expressed

her willingness to go to any group and make a presentation. Jane also has access to hoodies and can provide one to anyone with a donation of \$40 to the ministry.

Moses Merrill Camp and Conference: Bev Pacas shared a new brochure she has created for camp and is hoping to encourage greater registrations. Summer camp was approx. 250 campers in 2022. Registrations open January 1, 2023. Bev encourages all board members to present at churches and will provide materials to facilitate those presentations. Bev is inviting all board members and 2300 club members to come to camp for a day next summer. Bev is looking to hire a part time camp development person for next year.

Facilities: Water well – Orin Clinger and Bev Pacas have been working with a well company to replace the current well. Wells have tested high for two quarters and we are currently in violation. We are currently testing at 12 and 10 is the maximum. Andrew Rieschick with Rieschick Drilling Company is working with camp. His company meets the standards and credentials required by the health department. Health departments requires us to have an engineer hired by January of 2023. Costs associated with replacing the well are unable to be determined until the engineer is able to make a site visit.

In addition there have been sewer issues with Weaver Hall. Current sewer lines are clay pipe and will need to be replaced as part of any upcoming renovation.

Kitchen: Bev Pacas presented her updated blueprint ideas for the kitchen and is working with a contractor to obtain bids for the remodel.

There are four cabins left for remodel and camp is working on the remodel for cabin 7. Currently moving quickly with the remodel and demo on cabin 2 is in process with costs increasing over time. Costs to renovate are approximately \$20,000 per cabin instead of \$15,000 as originally expected.

Year End appeal is going out week after Thanksgiving and Bev Pacas included a Christmas Wish list in our materials. Bev Pacas will be traveling to North Carolina to attend the Christian Camp Conference.

Department of Professional Ministry: Currently there is one candidate, Blake Wilkes, FBC Arthur near end of process and preparing for ordination. There are some additional pastors in the region who have not moved towards ordination yet and there are several Burmese pastors looking towards recognition.

Discussion has arisen regarding the minimal education standards for ordination. Many applicants for ordination have certificates and not seminary degrees. This will be evaluated on a national basis.

ABMEN: ABMen have kicked off a fundraiser this week to replace one of the Gators used at camp, required amount is \$13,000.00. Desire is to have the funds raised by early 2023. Joy

Martinez-Marshall was awarded the Clergy Person of the Year Award at the recent pastor's conference.

ABWM: LaVonna Cline reviewed the recent Fall retreat in October 2022 at Moses Merrill. An installation of officers was held at the conference.

Transitional Executive Minister: Greg Mamula reported there have been shifts in recent churches, Paul Marine has retired from Sunset Hills Baptist church. Bill Prather, FBC Omaha, is currently battling a cancer and is undergoing chemo.

Greg worked with Suzi Ford and Jeff Woods and created an associate exec group over Zoom with other associate executives on region staff. They have been meeting since early summer and are supporting and learning from each other

Mission in 5 Podcast have been focusing on IM Global Servants. Greg created 10 episodes this season that are available at this time.

September 12-15, 2022, the region took a group of pastors to Ruth Haley Barton Sacred Rhythms workshop in Chicago.

ABCUSA is switching software from ABCUS to Netsuite and the region office is currently working to complete the transition.

Greg Mamula attended Space for Grace in Kansas City for one day. Greg was invited because his book was published through Judson Baptist.

Churches in Transition: Benson Baptist is currently interviewing candidates for their lead pastor position. Sunset Hills has put together a search committee and is beginning the process. FBC Scottsbluff is in the search process. United Faith Community Church has named a candidate; Scott Jones, who will be joining them full time in summer of 2023. FBC Fairbury is currently pending on their search and are working with an interim pastor at this time. Tekamah FBC is not partnering with ABC Nebraska for their pastor search. FBC Hastings is continuing to work with FBC Kearney for their pastoral preaching needs and have currently pended their pastor search. FBC Riverside has a retired pastor working as an interim.

Table Life Teachings: Recently Greg has done some work via Zoom with a region. Mission Northwest and Indiana/Kentucky region FBC Lincoln has just completed reading the book. s reading the book now and is celebrating FBC Norfolk completed the book this summer.

Fremont FBC had a mission conference in early October with leadership from across the national offices. It was a mission conference tied into an appreciation for the gift from the Perry and Dona Laten.

Fall Pastors conference was held in the fall and JR Briggs led the sessions centered on healing.

Fall Family Festival was held at Moses Merrill Camp and the general positive feeling about the conference.

Greg Mamula, along with the leadership in the Midwest, Central, and Rocky Mountains region has written a grant to co-host a youth conference in 2024.

Greg has visited eleven churches in region for preaching or a meeting over the most recent quarter.

Robin Stoops resignation has required much work to change names on accounts for Vanguard and Verizon. Greg Mamula and Bob Fairchild are working to correct the titling on the accounts.

Working on redecorating the region office at this time. Desiring to incorporate the logos of the different national ministry partners and highlighting the work they are doing.

Greg is working to improve the technology in the office and intends to update the website for the region.

Traci Gilmer moved that we approve the document confirming the housing allowance for Greg Mamula. Orin Clinger seconded. Motion passed.

Executive Session Meeting was pended until a later date.

Annual Region Business Meeting, via Zoom, was set for January 7, 2023 at 10 a.m. via Zoom.

April 22, 2023- meeting at Gibbon Baptist Church
August 26, 2023 – Meeting at Region Offices in Omaha
November 10-11, 2023 Meeting at Moses Merrill

A discussion was held regarding the non-attendance of board members. It was decided that the current administrative team would send out an email to those board members who do not attend the board meetings to discern their desire to continue with their positions on the board.

Clint Walker moved that we close the meeting. Traci Gilmer seconded.

Meeting was closed with prayer by Clint Walker.

Respectfully submitted,

Nola Crooks
Region Secretary