

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska
Saturday, May 3, 2025
Region Meeting
Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center

Members attending: Jill Blaylock, Orin Clinger, Nola Crooks, Patrick Fleeman, Jane Gangwish, Susan Howell, Doug Larsen, Laura Lyons, Greg Mamula, Joy Martinez-Marshall, Bev Pacas, Brad Pope, Jamie Yendra

Members attending by ZOOM: Hla Aung, Aaron Sprock, TN Praveen Kumar

Greg Mamula opened the meeting at 10:06 a.m. with greetings, a devotional from John 21, and prayer.

Greg Mamula discussed attendance at region board meetings and the need for a review for board members who have not attended multiple meetings.

Jane Gangwish welcomed the board to the leadership meeting and expressed appreciation for the meetings that have been held by the board members in order to pursue their leadership obligations.

The meeting minutes were approved motioned by Brad Pope and seconded by Jamie Yendra. Susan Howell noted that Wiechelman is spelled incorrectly, corrected the spelling.

Greg Mamula reviewed the upcoming dates for the remainder of 2025. Potential conflict for the November meeting, several board members noted meetings on a national level that conflict

Department of Professional Ministry:

Aaron Sprock in the continuation of the process of right standing in ordination for the individual mentioned in prior meetings.

Effort underway to condense multiple region documents into one document.

AB Men:

Brad Pope reported that they are planning ABMens conference.

Bob Myers is the conference speaker for the Men's conference, has written several books about the worship experience.

Using disaster relief money to provide stipends to volunteer fire departments in high risk fire areas of \$500.00.

Jason Workman is a licensed therapist, and has put together a one day workshop session for volunteer first responders, a date is scheduled in August 2025. ABMen are sponsoring all the attendees to attend the workshop at no charge. Jason Workman is planning second workshop for allow first responders to listen appropriately and ask question to fellow responders who are processing situations encountered in their work. ABMen are considering sponsoring the second one after seeing response to first workshop.

Jane Gangwish asked how the money is raised for disaster relief. Brad Pope shared that the disaster trailers that ABMen owned have been sold and provided the funds for disaster relief.

ABMen have a golf tournament on May 24,2025 to raise funds for scholarship. ABMen provide up to three scholarships yearly.

Greg mentioned the Nebraska relief disaster funds that could be used to supplement disaster relief projects that are in Nebraska.

American Baptist Women's Ministries:

Susan Howell reported that June conference is around the corner, recent board meeting was held to finalize activities.

Susan Howell mentioned the issues with the nominating committee finding people to be an officer. She is visiting additional churches to focus on the need for officers in ABWM.

Fall retreat – hoping to have it both East and West. “When Life Gives You Lemons” looking for a church to host in the west side of the state.

Wiechelman Fund – received a check last week from the Pennsylvania for \$103,000.00 Once we have a committee set up for the Wiechelman fund can recreate the trust. The original documents have been lost. Seeking members for the new committee that have the financial and knowledge wherewithal for the fund.

ABCUSA General Board:

Orin Clinger reported the next full meeting will be at Biennial-Mission Summit, July1-3, 2025. There are several upcoming meetings for the finance committee members, reviewing the audit, prepare for the Mission Summit meetings and the Mission Initiative Fund grant process and requests. The last meeting for 2025 will be November 13-15, 2025 in King of Prussia, PA.

Jane Gangwish dismissed the meeting at 10:53 a.m. for a short break. Meeting reconvened at 11:01 a.m.

Finance:

Greg Mamula reported for the finance committee. He reported that our finances are currently in the positive. The Laten Funds have been received for the year and will be spent throughout

the year. There have been an increase in direct region donations and an additional \$5000.00 gift was received from the Palestine church which has closed.

Joy Martinez Marshall is leaving the region but will remain on mission staff throughout Mission Summit, and will receive her salary.

The camp budget is positive and received funds from Harlan Waugh, a member of the Fremont FBC Church, who left his life insurance proceeds to camp in the amount of \$50,000.00. In addition the Palestine church left funds to the camp.

Bev Pacas indicated that there are substantial capital expenses at camp and those funds will either be used for those expenses or as seed money for another capital campaign.

Current mutual fund investments are down approximately 9% with current financial environment. The decision was made to take the first draw of 2025 early and the 2.5% was withdrawn in January. In addition, it was decided to trade in the two region vehicles for one newer vehicle, an additional \$18,000.00 was withdrawn for the expense of the new vehicle. Another draw of 2.5% will be taken in the last quarter of the year.

Weaver Hall project is below budget, leftover funds will be used to for capital repairs; the foundation and repairs to the conference center are being considered.

Jamie Yendra reported at a finance meeting last week that they are seeking to share the message by the finance committee to engage local congregations. The finance committee wwill be creating video and sending out screen slides for pre-church announcement videos.

Greg Mamula mentioned that Bob Fairchild will be at the end of his six year team at the end of the next calendar year, we will need to address the replacement for him and he would like the board to consider appointing a secondary finance chair to assist in the finance team and be prepared to cover the position after the term.

Patrick Fleeman inquired regarding the replacement of the Finance Chair and the possibility of hiring a CPA firm to cover it. Greg responded that the possibility of hiring finance to cover and the board can consider it, although we will need to always have an individual on the board.

Biennial Mission Summit:

Jamie Yendra reported that they will be putting an ask for volunteers for specific time slots. Currently there are only three children registered so far and there will be a registration to come out just for Sunday Morning and worship with the mission summit.

abcneregion@gmail.com is the region email for the volunteers.

On June 12, 2025, there will be a meeting for an orientation for local arrangement committee and volunteers.

Greg Mamula indicated that they have received a request from ABHMS for their luncheon on Sunday afternoon, looking for someone in the region to read a litany.

There are currently 600 people signed up for Biennial Mission Summit, however, it has been noted in previous years that many attendants register just prior to the event.

ABC NE Region Staff:

Blake Wilkes – Reported that he is on the cusp of a sabbatical. Has been working on the 3C3 committees and has been successful connecting pastors to the region. 3C3 will continue throughout the summer. Planning will be set up to allow the 3C3 group to meet online as well as in person.

Guild program – This will be utilized while he is on sabbatical and he will be creating a package so the program can be utilized for other churches in the future.

Joy Martinez Marshall – Joy is leaving the region for another call in Kansas and she extended her gratitude to be part of region staff the past two years.

Biennial has been her main focus of the past few months and also helped with Prairie Pastor Conference. Joy Martinez Marshall will remain on staff throughout the mission summit.

Aaron Sprock – Is planning a spousal retreat in conjunction with the region convention. Thursday and Friday through noon. Brian Marvel is the speaker and speaks on the idea of spiritual support, encouragement and value of the position. The retreat will be open to Central Region and Rocky Mountain regions.

IM: Mission partners will be here for Mission Summit, two mission partners Mercy Barnes and Mike and Becky Mann have reached out to provide their availability to local churches for visits.

Patrick Fleeman and Pastor Begley are planning for the October 2025 Region Convention in Scottsbluff.

Greg Mamula shared the information regarding the region conference in October and the current status of the planning. The board was provided a packet of information with speaker information and tentative schedule.

Region Update:

Greg provided a written report for the region update.

Greg Mamula advised that the region needs to update the Region policy and procedures as the current one dates back over a decade.

November board meeting will consist of a review of the executive minister and staff. Doug Larson is heading the committee for the review.

Audit with Tate and Weiler has been submitted. No charge due to the amount that is donated to the United Mission and we are in compliance with ABCUSA.

ABC congregations were asked to do an annual update. Several different platforms to submit the information. Currently our region has only had six submissions.

Greg requested an update to his housing allowance. Requesting approval for housing allowance increase to \$50,000.00 through the end of year. Susan Howell moved that we approve the housing allowance increase. Doug Larson seconded and motion passed unanimously.

The region needs to update the signatories for American National Bank, our current list of signatories is Greg Mamula, Sue Gammel, Beverly Pacas, Dick Peterson. Dick Peterson needs to be removed from the signatory list and Doug Larson added as signatory.

Susan Howell motioned that we update the signatories with American National Bank, Traci Gilmer seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Greg Mamula expressed his appreciation for the work of Joy Martinez Marshall and her work with the region during her tenure here.

Jane Gangwish dismissed the meeting for an on-site lunch at 11:55 am, meeting resumed at 12:35 pm.

Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center

Jane Gangwish began by stating all the activities that Bev Pacas executes at Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center and gave her a gift of flowers.

Bev Pacas reported is that Summer camp is less than one month, Love Courageously is the theme. Registration numbers are about the same as last year and aiming to have 200 summer campers. Summer staff is hired except the health aide, paid cabin leaders and kitchen staff are hired.

Most of the retreat groups from previous years are returning and expanding this year with new youth groups coming in July. Many of the groups hope to have these an annual event.

The Well, waiting on one last part, expecting it to be here in the first party of May. As soon as it is received the contractors will come out and connect the new well.

Cabin 1 is in progress but completion will have to wait until all other projects are completed. Basic plumbing is done and the expectation is that it will complete this summer.

Alarm system was replaced in conference center. When inspected the fire marshal requested the alarm system be extended to the chapel and the handicapped rooms have visual and sound warnings. This will have to be updated and currently waiting on parts.

HVAC has been replaced in conference center and chapel.

The swimming pool lost water this winter, the pool has been drained and the pool company came out and indicated that the water valves in the walls are crumbling. The valves will need to be replaced and it is scheduled to be repaired when time available. The cost for the repair is approximately \$9,000.00. There may be no pool for JAM camp and Bev Pacas is considering alternatives.

The March blizzard set everything back for the Weaver Hall reconstruction two weeks. Significant tree damage and camp has had two days with volunteer work crews but there are still a substantial amount of downed trees to clear. All trails are unpassable at this time due to tree damage. The camp does not have a chipper and is reviewing what to do with the large amount of downed trees.

Weaver Hall is not ready for inspection, mainly due to the hood in the kitchen that has been slow in coming. All work and inspections will need to be completed prior to JAM camp and the time line is drawing close. Currently, the remodeling is running approximately \$100,000.00 under budget and the excess will be used for additional capital projects around Weaver Hall such as replacing the deck and setting up an outdoor kitchen area for the grills.

Bev Pacas expressed her thanks for all the support, stated "We serve a big God and Weaver Hall is testament to it."

Jane Gangwish closed the meeting with prayer at 1:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nola Crooks
ABC NE Secretary