

**Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council  
Executive Committee  
Minutes  
June 15, 2004**

Members present: Bishop Harold Usgaard, Vice president Shirley Gangstad, Treasurer Jeffery Setterlund, Secretary BettyAnn Hernke, Ann Beatty, and Rev. Scott Olson.

Staff present: Deborah Norrie, Recorder

Deborah Norrie led devotions.

Ms. Shirley Gangstad called the Executive Committee meeting to order at 4:00 PM in the Synod Office Conference Room, Assisi Heights, Rochester.

Ms. BettyAnn Hernke presented the minutes of the meeting March 23, 2004. Mr. Jeffery Setterlund made a motion to accept the minutes as printed. The motion was seconded.

**Voted**

**EC.04.06.01 to accept the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting March 23, 2004.**

Mr. Setterlund was called on to present the Treasurer's Report.

1. May income was at 86% of the annual budget but at 98% of the historical budget for the first four months of the fiscal year. Mr. Setterlund doesn't feel we need to be concerned about our income at this time. Synod staff will keep the committee informed about the June and July income. As of June 11, Mission Support income was at \$103,000.
2. The May draft accounting report was reviewed and explained to the new committee members.
3. The committee reviewed the checkbook transaction report for June.
4. The bank balance was \$195,649.46.

Ms. Norrie raised the subject of the excess cash left in the checkbook at the end of 2003. All ministry partners were paid at 98.6% of the budgeted amount which reflected the level of income in 2003. There was \$30,000 cash left because of the fee for service agreement with the ELCA for synod stewardship work. There was a discussion of the contract with the ELCA and how the accountant and auditor account for it on the synod financial statements. The synod does not budget office expenses and personnel amounts to reflect these payments. The ELCA could cut these payments and if we have not budgeted for Larry Iverson's total salary and expenses, it would be difficult to make up the difference in the budget. The committee discussed putting the entire amount into the Board Designated Operating Reserve. Ann Beatty made a motion to move \$30,000 into the Thrivent Income Account – Board Designated Operating Reserve. The motion was seconded.

**Voted**

**EC.04.06.02 To invest \$30,000 reserved cash from the checking account into the Thrivent Income Account – Board Designated Operating Reserve.**

The committee asked that the minutes reflect that this money is earmarked for relocation costs for the synod office. It was decided not to put that language into the motion so as to not restrict the money for that purpose if it is needed for other purposes.

Ms. Norrie informed the Executive Committee that a Workers' Compensation claim has been filed on behalf of Elizabeth Gabriel who experienced back problems after assisting the Assisi Heights housekeeper in moving a desk for our office.

Ms. Hernke made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. The motion was seconded.

**Voted**

**EC.04.06.03 To accept the Treasurer's Report.**

Old Business

Bishop Usgaard updated the committee on the implementation of the 2005 phase of the strategic plan.

1. The logo and phrase have been added to the synod's letterhead
2. There will be a column every month in *River Crossings*
3. Annie Lynsen, synod communications director, is looking into producing a poster for every congregation
4. Annie Lynsen and Shirley Gangstad are doing 5 workshops, one in each conference, in July for congregation secretaries and communications people

The bishop then updated the committee on the synod office space situation.

1. He has met with a task force to review the office space needs of the synod staff. This group has toured several potential office sites and is working on ideas about how to more efficiently lay out an office.
2. The synod staff and Shirley Gangstad have also continued to meet with the work group from Gloria Dei, Rochester; Good Earth Village; Augsburg College; Luther College; and the Sons of Norway regarding a joint building project.
3. The Sisters have not made a decision on the sale of Assisi Heights. They hope to have news for us by the end of the summer.

The synod staff will keep the committee informed as these groups continue their work. He commented that the synod has been spoiled by our lease arrangement with the Sisters. Whatever option is the final decision, it will cost more. Rent will increase and we expect that utilities, maintenance and custodial costs now included in our lease cost will have to be paid. Also, any relocation will incur costs in installation of the phone system and the computer network and the actual cost of moving the office.

The committee asked questions about the various options open for the office and had good discussion. This will be a continuing agenda item for the Executive Committee and the Synod Council in the next year or two.

There was no other old business.

#### New Business

Bishop Usgaard presented his idea for the 2005 assembly. In 2005 there will be a 1000 pound elephant in the room – the sexuality study. He believes there will be many resolutions. He would like to build the assembly around the idea: How do we, as Christians, handle difficult issues? The bishop believes that the assembly needs to struggle with the issues and would like to facilitate as much conversation as possible.

1. Bishop Margaret Payne, New England Synod – our partner synod, will be attending the 2005 assembly. She would be the keynote presenter talking about how her faith has been tested and grown in her work on the sexuality study document.
2. Bible study leader that would teach about how Lutherans understand and read the Bible.
3. Invite Tim Penny, Steve Sviggum and Dean Johnson to talk about how faith influences their decision making and how they work together when they are at opposite sides of issues.
4. In order facilitate small group conversation after the keynote, the Bible study, the bishop's report and the resolutions, would it be possible to sit people at round tables in the assembly hall? Should we assign people to tables to mix people up for this conversation?
5. Host a picnic on Friday night as a more casual, friendly gathering than a formal, sit-down dinner.

The committee discussed a number of items that could save time at the assembly. We need to identify the consent items that could be presented to the assembly to expedite business: treasurer's report; report of the audit; nominations and election reports, for example. The committee also decided that to save travel time, worship will continue to be held in Presentation Hall at the Mayo Civic Center rather than go to a church.

The committee is very concerned about how to handle the expected blizzard of resolutions in 2005. Receiving resolutions until the end of the first day of the assembly makes it very difficult to plan the presentation of the resolutions. Also, some times resolutions received by the Committee on Reference & Counsel by the deadline for publication receive less time at the assembly. Often times resolutions that come to the assembly late are not well written and the debate is not on the issue but on what words have been used. In an effort to better handle resolutions in 2005 the committee discussed a rule change to the assembly. Ann Beatty made a motion to change the rules about resolutions for the 2005 synod assembly. The motion was seconded.

**Voted**

**EC.04.06.04 To propose the following rules for the 2005 Synod Assembly:**

**Resolutions must be submitted on or before \*\* . This change is made so that all resolutions that will come before the assembly can be included in the pre-assembly materials and voting members and others in congregations may have opportunity to review and discuss them.**

**Resolutions that come to the Committee on Reference & Counsel after \*\* will come before the assembly only by means of a motion to suspend the rules for the purpose of considering the late resolution. A vote to suspend the rules requires a two-thirds vote.**

**\*\* Deadlines have not yet been set for the 2005 Pre-assembly report. That date will appear in the notice printed in the assembly information.**

Bishop Usgaard visited the New England Synod Assembly. He met a group, named “The Guys” that led worship at the assembly. He has invited “The Guys” to attend our assembly. The bishop said they wouldn’t lead our worship, but would lead singing during the assembly. He said the group is light-hearted and fun and would be a good break during the business of the assembly. The committee also suggested that this group could do a gathering Friday night for youth.

The World Hunger Task Force presented a proposal for the theme of the 2005 Synod Assembly. Ms. Norrie will ask the Assembly Planning Committee to involve the World Hunger Task Force as much as possible. World Hunger will be highlighted throughout the assembly. A member of the hunger task force will be invited to be on the planning committee.

Bishop Usgaard, Deborah Norrie and Jan Severson, assembly manager, will be meeting in July. Ms. Norrie and Ms. Severson will invite interested people to be a part of the assembly planning and arrangements committee. Bishop Usgaard and Ms. Norrie will also recruit a worship planning group. The Executive Committee will appoint these committees at the August meeting.

Ms. Gangstad reviewed the list of Executive Committee meetings for the next year. All meetings will be at 4:00.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM and closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

BettyAnn Hernke, Secretary  
Deborah Norrie, Recorder