

**American Baptist Churches of Rhode Island**  
Board of Ministries Meeting  
September 14, 2024

The ABCORI Board of Ministries held its regularly scheduled meeting on Saturday, September 14, 2024, at 9 a.m. at The Baptist Church in Warren.

**Present:** Rev. George Barclay, Ms. Beth Berry, Mr. Bob Butzier, Ms. Joanne Brown, Rev. Darin Collins, Rev. Dr. Courtney Davis Olds (Executive Minister), Mr. Dave Dolce (Treasurer), Mr. Jim Ellison, Ms. Jan Fletcher, Ms. Sue Guilmain, Ms. Eva Irby-Davis (Vice President), Rev. Debra Lee (Clerk), Rev. Dr. Cal Lord (President), Rev. Kathryn Palen, Rev. Sarah Reed Jay

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m. by President Cal Lord, who then offered a devotion and prayer.

**Approval of Minutes:** Draft minutes were provided to board members electronically in advance of the meeting. Minutes from the board's meeting on June 17, 2024 were approved as corrected. Minutes from the board's special meeting on July 9, 2024, were approved as presented.

**Reports:** Cal Lord announced that member-at-large Dr. Michael Browner submitted his resignation from the board. Constraints on his time prevent him from attending board meetings.

Written reports were provided to board members electronically in advance of the meeting from the Executive Minister, Associate Executive Minister, Treasurer, Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, By-Laws Revision Task Force, SCOM, and American Baptist Women's Ministries. Sue Guilmain moved to receive these reports; Darin Collins seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Cal Lord called attention to the date of the 2025 ABCORI Annual Gathering, which was included in the Executive Minister's report. That event will be held on March 1, 2025.

**Update from the Executive Committee Concerning Sale of the Canonicus Property:**

Cal Lord and Courtney Davis Olds provided an update on the Executive Committee's work since being tasked with taking initial steps toward the sale process. Guidance has been sought from Marc Gertsacov, a real estate attorney who has worked with ABCORI in the past. A title search on the property has been completed; there are no liens or encumbrances. The towns of North Kingstown and Exeter have been notified of the decision to sell the Canonicus property. The ABCORI office has received several unsolicited expressions of interest in the property; a file is being kept of these.

Conversations have taken place with representatives from Rhode Island's Department of Environmental Management (DEM) regarding options for conservation. DEM is very interested in working with ABCORI toward a conservation outcome for the Canonicus property. Beth Berry moved that the Executive Committee continue good-faith conversations with DEM regarding conservation possibilities. Jan Fletcher seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Because the Breezymere house is on its own parcel of land and was not included in the appraisal of the property, it is possible that home/parcel could be sold separately from the remainder of the Canonicus property if the current resident wished to purchase it. Beth Berry moved that the Executive Committee explore the possibility of selling the Breezymere home to the current resident. Joane Brown seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Courtney Davis Olds presented proposed separation packages for the ABCORI staff members who will be impacted by the cessation of Canonicus operations and the eventual sale of the property. Sue Guilmain moved that the separation packages be approved as presented. Joanne Brown seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**Sharing Session Follow-up:** Board members were provided with electronic versions of the board's presentation at the August 24 and 27 sharing sessions; a list of attendees at each session; notes from the Q&A portion of the sessions; and notes from the small group conversations at tables. Cal Lord encouraged board members to review these and especially note positive suggestions that can help ABCORI move forward.

Cal Lord reported that he has received letters from two ABCORI member churches calling for a special ABCORI business meeting to discuss the board's decision to sell the Canonicus property. Another church sent a letter requesting additional information that has already been made available (meeting minutes, annual finance reports) or that is confidential (giving records from individual churches). Per the by-laws, a special meeting shall be called by the President upon written request of ten constituent member churches.

Sarah Reed Jay moved that the board call a special business meeting on the basis of the letters received thus far, without waiting for the requisite ten as specified in the by-laws. George Barclay seconded. Discussion followed regarding the pros and cons of such an action, as well as what the purpose of the special meeting would be. Following extensive discussion, three votes were in favor of the motion and nine votes were in opposition. Motion failed.

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 12:20 p.m.

The next ABCORI Board of Ministries meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 28, 2024, at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Submitted by Rev. Debra Lee, Clerk