

**AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF RHODE ISLAND
BOARD OF MINISTRIES MEETING**

Approved Minutes

March 28, 2022

The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

Present: President Beth Berry; Rev. Dr. Clayton Lord, Vice President; Rev. Dr. Courtney Davis Olds, Executive Minister; David Coon, Esq., Treasurer; Rev. Kathryn Palen, Associate Executive Minister for Elder Care Ministries; Rev. Wendy Kiefer-O'Brien, Past President; Robert Butzier; Judy Butzier; Rev. Bob Auld; Eva Irby-Davis; Rev. George Barclay; James Ellison; Rev. Dr. Daniel Cottrell; Rev. Leigh Johnson; Lynne Linden, BOM Clerk; and guests from the ABCORI Ministries at Canonicus Task Force, Rev. Natasha Gordon and Christine Monteiro.

Introductions: President Berry invited all meeting participants to take a moment to introduce themselves to Rev. Davis Olds before the meeting began.

Opening Time of Prayer: President Berry opened the meeting with prayer.

Call to Order: President Berry called the meeting to order at 7:08.

Approval of Minutes from January 31, 2022: The minutes of the January 31, 2022 meeting were approved as presented. Moved by Rev. Wendy Kiefer-O'Brien; Seconded by Rev. Leigh Johnson.

Continuing Business:

- **Treasurer's Report** – Treasurer Coon presented the Treasurer's Report and the Financial Statement as of 2-28-22 which had been provided by email. There were no questions. David said the first invoice for the dam project is expected shortly. To keep the costs down on the project, it had been agreed that the invoices would be paid within 10 days of receipt. The Operations Committee had voted that payments would be made by increasing the amount of the margin loan on the portfolio. However, \$65,000 was received in gifts and David asked the Board of Ministries if it was the Board's intention to use gifts and any grants received before using the loan. The Board agreed that was the intention.
- Treasure Coon also submitted the following statement and made a motion to approve the following resolution.

With the annual turnover in the membership of the Investment Committee, we need to appoint and authorize members who are entitled to direct our investment manager, Alliance Bernstein, to make investment changes and to direct the withdrawal of funds when authorized by the committee. Accordingly, I present the following motion:

RESOLVED: That Robert C. Butzier, Chair of the Operations Team, and David G. Coon, Treasurer, or either one of them acting individually, be and hereby are authorized to sell, transfer and/or deliver any and all stock, bonds, or other securities now and hereafter registered in the name of the American Baptist Churches of Rhode Island. All previous such authorizations are hereby revoked.

A question was asked regarding whose authority the stocks, bonds and securities fell. David stated they were under the Investment Committee's authority.

There was no further discussion. The motion was seconded by Rev. Wendy Kiefer-O'Brien. The motion was carried.

David indicated that the Investment Committee currently did not have a chairperson and was without a financial administrator. Also, he expressed concern that there were only two members at-large. This is not a good situation for the organization. He requested that Board members consider people who could be asked to become the financial administrator or at-large members.

Treasurer Coon requested that when the bylaws are next reviewed, the Board of Ministries consider the possibility of merging the Investment and Budget Committees into a single Finance Committee in order to reduce the number of positions having oversight of ABCORI's finances that must be filled.

Jim Ellison stated that the Baptist Home Board had made a grant to the dam project and asked when the money should be provided. Mr. Coon asked that it be sent as soon as possible as the invoices are expected soon. Jim said he would contact the Baptist Home Board treasurer to request that money be sent.

President Berry spoke of previous dinners that hosted interested members of the pooled funds to hear about the investments. She suggested this would be a good pool of candidates for the at-large members of the Investment Committee. Bob Butzier agreed to retrieve the list of former attendees to invite and David Coon said the Alliance Bernstein representative had already offered to make a presentation.

- **Committees**

- Operations Team

- Bob Butzier told the Board that Sue Colantonio had agreed to join the Investment Committee for a one year term. President Berry entertained a motion to accept the nomination of Sue Colantonio to the Investment Committee. The motion was approved. Bob said he would work with Sue, David Coon and Tom Archer on starting fundraising again.

More members are also needed for the Properties Committee as there are only two at-large members and it is without a chairperson. Bob will continue to serve as the liaison between Properties and Operations. There are many projects that need to be completed in addition to the dam project which may take the committee out of budget. Decisions will need to be made on completing all projects while remaining in budget which may require some to be designated as capital expenses.

- **Reports from Staff**

- Elder Care Ministries

- Rev. Kathryn Palen provided a written report summarizing activities and programs this ministry has been engaged in, which included a Lenten Zoom coffee chat series entitled "*W is for Lent*". This series helped participants reflect on how selected words might help them wind their way toward Easter. Also, a non-traditional Lenten resource was provided via Zoom entitled "*Sharing Our Stories: Stepping Stones for Lent*". Each week suggestions have been provided to help participants share their stories. There are a number of new programs that will begin in April, including the next coffee chat series entitled, "Growing in...".

Kathryn announced that registration will open in the next few weeks for "*A Grand Adventure: Stories, Steps & Stars*" which is a five-day/four-night camp experience for grandparents and grandchildren. Registration will open in May for "*Paths of Discovery*", a four-day/three-night retreat for older adults. Planning is nearing completion for a fall pilot program for pastors nearing retirement.

Kathryn stated that she and Donna Sherman were very excited about the ideas and suggestions that came from the two older adult groups that participated in the focus groups discussing Camp Canonicus.

President Berry complimented Kathryn's current coffee chat series.

Old Business

- ABCORI Ministries At Canonicus Task Force report – President Berry introduced Rev. Natasha Gordon and Christine Monteiro from the Canonicus Task Force. Rev. Gordon had provided a written report via email which summarized the activities and findings of the task force over the past three months. She highlighted several points within the report:

- Seventeen (17) telephone interviews were conducted with individuals with experience throughout Canonicus' history
 - A survey was developed and sent to ABCORI congregations regarding congregational use of the property
 - Thirty-three (33) responses were received (just under 50% response)
 - Four (4) focus groups were held
 - Two for older adults, one for parents and youth and one for Christian educators

○ Findings

- An overarching appreciation for the property as a natural resource and a desire to maintain the camp
- A variety of opinions as to the purpose of the ministry of the property
 - Theology and faith development have taken a less prominent role
- The location of Canonicus and transportation were important limiting factors for use
- The need for leadership with spiritual gifts, knowledge of the property and training
- Suggestion to allow churches with low numbers of young people to bring them together in larger gatherings at Canonicus
- Great ideas from the older adults for uses for Canonicus

President Berry stated this is just the jumping off point and the Board of Ministries and the Executive Minister need to consider what steps need to be taken next.

Thanks was extended to all who had done the work to gather this information. A question was asked as to what was meant by theology and faith development taking a less prominent role. President Berry said that although theology and faith development were acknowledged in the focus groups since Canonicus is a Christian camp, it was not mentioned as a place where young people will come to love Jesus.

There was considerable discussion about the next steps and the need to keep ABCORI's financial situation in mind as ABCORI proceeds with its visioning for Canonicus. Rev. Davis Olds emphasized that the first question to address is to what extent does the ministry of Canonicus fit into the ministry of ABCORI? It was stated that nothing needed to be done regarding Canonicus in this meeting. Rev. Davis Olds requested that information about what has been suggested and tried in the past be gathered into a packet to be provided to all members of the Board. Then, in the next few meetings, the Board should begin a discernment process as to the purpose for Canonicus.

New Business

• New Executive Minister Transition

Rev. Dr. Courtney Olds Davis, new Executive Minister, commented on the report that she provided via e-mail. That report is displayed in its entirety below.

Executive Minister's Report

Getting Started

During March, I have gotten to know ABCORI by attending the Annual Meeting, reading documents such as the Bylaws and the Employee Manual, and participating in meetings of the staff, the Executive Committee, the Investment Committee, and the Canonicus Task Force.

My first few weeks in the office will be devoted to setting up and settling in. Towards those ends, I have a half-day orientation with ABCUSA General Secretary Jeff Woods on April 5th, and I have scheduled meetings with each of the staff members during my first week.

Looking Ahead

Although I still have much to learn about ABCORI, I have begun to identify areas on which I initially plan to focus. These are (in no particular order):

- Attention to ABCORI's staffing situation.
- Discernment around the future of Canonicus.
- Guidance regarding policies, procedures, and processes.
- Relationships with ABCORI pastors and churches.
- Assistance to churches in transition.

I also wish to establish a good working relationship with the Board of Ministries, part of which entails clarity on all sides as to delineation of the staff's responsibilities/authority and BOM's responsibilities/authority.

Making the Transition

Nate and I appreciate all of the effort that has gone into preparing Snell Lodge for our arrival. We will be moving in on Saturday, April 2nd.

I will be attending the Annual Conference of the Academy of Religious Leadership, of which I am the incoming President, from April 28th to April 30th. Also at the end of April, Nate and I will return to Philadelphia for 1-2 weeks to tend to our apartment building there and to close on its sale. I will work remotely during that time, but will need to be "out of the office" on occasion to tend to the logistics of a long-distance move. As of May 12th, I will officially and exclusively be a resident of Rhode Island.

As I get settled in Rhode Island, I would appreciate recommendations for a realtor and for an accountant who is conversant with clergy tax codes. Please email me at cdavisolds@abcori.org.

Final Business

It was announced that the Canonicus Task Force would be meeting one final time.

President Berry also informed the Board that there is a possibility of a RI DEM grant to put a portion of the forested area of Canonicus into protection. She has confirmed with a representative of DEM that there is not any restriction due to our being a religious organization.

Dave Coon proposed obtaining our own appraisal of the property being considered for this grant since the amount of the grant would be $\frac{3}{4}$ the value that DEM determines the property to be worth. Kathryn Palen suggested adding this item to the April agenda and it was agreed that no further action would be taken on this item before the next meeting except for gathering information.

Adjourn/Closing Prayer

President Berry asked all in attendance to be in prayer for a unifying vision in regard to the Canonicus property.

Dave Coon Moved for Adjournment; Seconded by Rev. George Barclay. President Berry gave the closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 25th at 7:00 P.M. in person at Canonicus.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Linden

Lynne Linden
Clerk