**Executive**

**Horseshoe Falls Regional Council**

**of The United Church of Canada**

**Supports, Connects, Empowers Communities of Faith**

**Minutes May 2, 2024, 1:30 PM via Zoom**

**Receiving the report of the Review of**

**Welcome/Land Acknowledgement**

At 1:32 President Lennox offered a welcome to everyone and shared a land acknowledgment.

**Constitute meeting:** President Lennox

*I constitute this meeting in the name of Jesus Christ, the one true head of the Church and by the*

*authority vested in me by this meeting of the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council for whatever business may properly come before it. The bounds of the meeting will be the Zoom call.*

**Worship**

Executive Minister Mark Laird shared a meditation from *Taking Flight: A Book of Story Meditations* which focused on not losing sight of the spirit at work.

**MOTION:** Adrianne Robertson/Sula Kosacky

That the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council Executiveappoint the Executive Minister to act as recording secretary for this meeting. **CARRIED.**

**MOTION:** Christina Crawford/Wendy Lowden

That the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council Executive receive the report of the J4 Review of

prepared by Linda Foy. **CARRIED.**

**MOTION**: Yvonne Wright/ Deborah Laforet

That the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council Executivemakes those attending the meeting from

and the Reviewer Linda Foy corresponding members. **CARRIED.**

**Hear from Reviewer Linda Foy**

President Lennox thanked Linda and asked her to share her thoughts on the report with those gathered. Linda shared her experience and the complications that arose from doing this Review and explained the difference between a congregation and minister focused review.

**Questions to the Reviewer from the Executive**

Questions were asked to the Reviewer, about her ideas around the concept and idea around what is meant by systemic problems. There were also questions about the work of

, and the differences needed. President Lennox thanked Linda for her work.

**Statement from **

The Chair and Vice Chair of  read a report that was prepared for the Executive by the board of . There was some time for questions from the Executive to the members of .

President Lennox thanked the members of  for their engagement and excused them from the meeting.

**Discuss the review and make decisions**

1. **MOTION:** Adrianne Robertson/Sula Kosacky

That the Executive of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council concurs with the following findings of the J4 Review of  that:

1.  Community of Faith is in an unsatisfactory state. That said, the Reviewer found  to be a friendly, active, viable, and compassionate church.
2. The reason is in an unsatisfactory state at the moment is because, of the four staff positions, , only one employee, , is ‘on the job’. Further, the Chair of M&P and the Treasurer have not been able to operate in their roles for the last while. Volunteers have stepped up to keep the Church going, but this is not a sustainable situation. Moreover, the congregation is unsettled due to a lack of knowledge about why staff and volunteers are off, and when or whether they will return. This appears to have created ‘talk’, which is counter-productive to a loving community.
3. Information gathered during this Review shows that worship services occur regularly, and a number of people find that the services ‘fit the bill’. The music program is extensive and well-appreciated. In fact, is known for its music. The church has an active pastoral care network and wide-ranging outreach efforts. It collaborates with other area churches as well. While annual reports indicate that  is drawing on reserves and investment income in order to pay the bills, the church does not appear to be in jeopardy in the short term, and this did not present as an area of concern for those who spoke with the Reviewer.
4. The fact that  and dedicated volunteers have been able to keep the church running, and keep the Sunday attendance up, speaks volumes for the positive sense of community and the faith of the people at .
5.  vision is one that encompasses spirituality, compassion and action, as illustrated by its recent Strategic Planning report. Further, it has a well thought-out plan to work towards this vision.
6. Although congregants are upset with being left in the dark with respect to the absent staff members, confidentiality is required when formal complaints are lodged in order to protect the person who complains and the person being complained about. The particular situation at has a number of facets, and it is unlikely that either the Board or the Regional Council could have done things differently and still maintained the rights of those involved in the complaints. Moreover, it must be noted that it is the Office of Vocation, and not Regional Council, that handles  administrative leave and the issues concerning that leave.
7. The Review has found situations that could be improved for the immediate and long-term health of the church. For example, it would be helpful going forward if M&P put formal measures in place to closely follow a new actions and progress so that problems are less likely to occur. This would not be a matter of micro-management, but rather a regular and thorough check-in. Such a check-in could be coordinated to include the different people who are involved in the  work.
8. The Reviewer documented some ‘Other Issues’ for the church’s consideration. They include severing the  task from the  role.
9.  has a vision, and information gathered during the Review shows that the congregation has the willpower and person-power to do justice to the vision. What is required is ministry personnel who not only provide church services that nourish, teach, and inspire, and who engage with social justice issues, but who are keen to work collaboratively with fellow staff and the many volunteers who make things happen at . The information collected during the review shows that many of those interviewed no longer believe that  can serve the Church in this manner. **CARRIED.**
10. **MOTION**: Deborah Laforet/James Grunden

That the Executive of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council does not concur with the findings of the J4 Review of  that:

1. The Reviewer did not see evidence of ‘systemic’ problems at  with respect to the congregation, the Board, the committees, the work of the Church, or the Minister of Music and music program. There has, however, been issues between individuals. It appears that these problems can be attributed to personality, leadership style, and working style.
2.  appears to have the relevant workplace policies at hand in the office. Going forward, M&P can ensure that staff are aware of these policies and where to find them. **CARRIED.**
3. **MOTION:** Yvonne Wright/James Grunden

That the Executive of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council requires the Governing Body of  to update their policies to be in line with the new structural changes of The United Church of Canada and to then be distributed to and discussed with staff and members of committees. **CARRIED.**

1. **MOTION:** Yvonne Wright /Adrianne Robertson

That the Executive of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council provide the Office of Vocation with Appendix A and B for their consideration. **CARRIED.**

1. **MOTION:** Debbie McMillan/Wendy Lowden

That the Executive of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council directs the M&P & Chair of the Official Board of  to work with the Executive Minister and the Minister Pastoral Relations and to work out the possibility of return-to-work plan and reintegration into the church community. **CARRIED.**

1. **MOTION**: Debbie McMillan/Deborah Laforet

That the Executive of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council requires the current M&P committee members to undergo the training offered by Horseshoe Falls Regional Council within the next 3 months, and recommend any future member participate in the M&P training within the first 2 months of joining the committee. **CARRIED.**

1. **MOTION:** Yvonne Wright/Adrianne Robertson

That the Executive of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council directs the Executive Minister and Minister Pastoral Relations to reach out to both  and the Board of to provide advice and assistance in relation to recommendation 115. **CARRIED**.

1. **MOTION:** Wendy Lowden/Christina Crawford

That the Executive of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council directs the M&P committee of , to meet with the Pastoral Relations Minister before the end of June to debrief the situation of the last 8 months, and encourage the M&P to reach out to the Minister Pastoral Relations if challenging situations arise in the future. **CARRIED.**

1. **MOTION:** John Hurst/Christina Crawford

That the Executive of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council directs the Official Board and entire M&P Committee to participate in the United Fresh Start Modules: Conflict 1, Conflict 2, both parts of Building Respectful Conversations, and Diversity as soon as possible. These named United Fresh Start modules to be paid for by Horseshoe Falls Regional Council. **CARRIED.**

**Discuss follow-up with WDHV decisions that were pending the outcome of the review**

1. **MOTION:** Wendy Lowden/Yvonne Wright

That the Executive of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council will reinstate  to duties as Chair of Ministry and Personnel and any other leadership or volunteer position of the church pending  participation and completion of the United Fresh Start Modules required of the Official Board of  and either write a report for or have conversation with either Executive Minister or Minister Pastoral Minister about what they learned. **CARRIED.**

1. **MOTION:** John Hurst /Wendy Lowden

That the Executive of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council will reinstate  to all of  duties as Treasurer and any and any other leadership or volunteer position of the church pending participation and completion of the United Fresh Start Modules required of the Official Board of  and either write a report for or have conversation with either the Executive Minister or Minister Pastoral Minister about what they learned.  is able to aid in the completion of the year end finances now. **CARRIED.**

1. **MOTION:** John Hurst/Christina Crawford

That the Executive of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council requires  and  to undergo a process of mediation with  pending  return to work, the facilitator to be paid for by the Regional Council. **CARRIED.**

**Discussion around what further actions need to be undertaken**

1. **MOTION:** James Grunden/Wendy Lowden

That the Executive of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council directs the Official Board of to work with the Executive Minister to develop a plan to share the report or parts of the report with the congregation of , which does not include providing personal copies, either electronic or paper to the congregants. **CARRIED.**

1. **MOTION**: Christina Crawford/Debbie McMillan

That the Executive of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council directs the Executive Minister to communicate these decisions to the governing body of . **CARRIED**.

1. **MOTION:** Debbie McMillan/Christina Crawford

That the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council Executive direct the Executive Minister to thank Linda Foy for her work and release her from the task. **CARRIED.**

1. **MOTION:** Wendy Lowden/Yvonne Wright

That the Executive of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council are to delete/destroy copies of the reports, keeping one on official file at Horseshoe Falls Regional Council office. **CARRIED.**

**Closing Prayer**

**President Lennox adjourned the meeting at 6:23 PM.**