

Council Agenda November 16 2023	2
Diocesan Council Minutes 9.28.23	3
HR Committee Policy Recommendations 9.28.23	6

DIOCESAN COUNCIL AGENDA

November 16, 2023

2:00 p.m. via Zoom

Gathering Time and Opening Prayer

Introduction of new members: Holly Dolan, Roland Holstead, Pat O'Connell, Martha Sipe

Consent agenda: (on portal)

- September Council Minutes

Resolutions from Human Resources Committee (on portal)

Bishop's items

Transition Update (Rich)

Adjourn

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Officers and Appointed Members:

The Rt. Rev. Douglas Fisher, President

The Rev. Nathaniel Anderson, Vice President

Ms. Wende Wheeler, Secretary

The Rev. Dr. Richard Simpson, Assistant Secretary

Mr. Mark Rogers, Treasurer

Mr. Frank Minasian, Trustee Representative

Term of Office Expires:

Convention of 2024 - Eliot Moss, Rick Gore, Pat O'Connell, Kurt Hultgren

Convention of 2025 - Mary Rosendale, Michael Tuck, vacancy

Convention of 2026 - Holly Dolan, Roland Holstead, Martha Sipe

**Minutes of the Diocesan Council of
the Diocese of Western Massachusetts**

September 28, 2023

2:30p.m.

Joint meeting with Standing Committee 3:30 p.m.

Present

The Rt. Rev. Doug Fisher, President
The Rev. Nathaniel Anderson, Vice President
Richard Gore
Kurt Hultgren
The Rev. Charlotte LaForest
The Rev. Eliot Moss
Mark Rogers, Treasurer
The Rev. Mary Rosendale
The Rev. Rich Simpson
The Rev. Michael Tuck
Wende Wheeler, Secretary

Guests for portions of the meeting

Kim Foster, CFO
Chris Perry
Harvey Hill, Beloved Community Commission
Eric LaForest, Beloved Community Commission

Absent

Richard Delorme
Frank Minasian
Reynolds Whalen

DIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. The meeting was opened by the Bishop leading prayer time.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda was moved, seconded and passed unanimously.

Three resolutions from the Budget and Financial Planning Committee

(1) Diocesan CFO Kim Foster presented the budget for 2024, which has been commended to Council by the Budget and Financial Planning Committee. Kim and Mark also answered questions from Council members on her presentation.

Mark then moved that the Council approve the 2024 as presented. The motion was seconded, and passed unanimously.

(2) Mark also moved that an additional draw of up to \$125,000 be taken from the Rainy Day Fund in support of the 2024 operating budget. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

(3) Mark moved an additional draw of \$3,200 from the Creation Care Fund in support of An Episcopal Path to Creation Care Justice. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Update on Solar Farm Project

Dr. Chris Perry, a member of St. Stephen's in Pittsfield, offered a presentation about the potential for the creation of photovoltaic farms to offset electricity costs for the Diocese of Western Massachusetts. Following his presentation, questions, and discussion, he indicated that the next step would be to form an exploratory committee in the Diocese, and suggested that such a committee might include:

- Someone knowledgeable about solar installations
- A master electrician
- A lawyer with expertise in commercial or non-profit law
- People with expertise in business and/or finance

Chris will also be available at a future Council meeting to answer additional questions and discuss next steps.

JOINT MEETING WITH STANDING COMMITTEE

The joint session opened at 3:44 p.m. with prayer by Charlotte LaForest. The Bishop then thanked those going off Council as of this meeting: Charlotte LaForest, Dick Delorme, Reynolds Whalen, and Tom Callard.

Update on Human to Human

Mark Rogers gave an update on the work of Human to Human.

Updated Property Questions Document

A motion was made that Council adopt the *Process: Congregational Property and the Standing Committee and Diocesan Council/EMWMDiocesan* document as presented. It seconded and passed unanimously. It was similarly passed by Standing Committee and will become a document for use in guiding parishes facing situations as outlined. The document will be posted on the Diocesan website for reference.

Bishop's Time

The Bishop:

- Updated on the health of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry.
- Reported on the previous week's Zoom House of Bishops' meeting. Topics included the declining numbers in The Episcopal Church, and the issue of episcopal accountability.
- Noted the ongoing challenge for parishes with large buildings and the efforts to help those parishes address their issues.
- Reported on a recent meeting with members of our Spanish-speaking congregations.

Presentation by the Beloved Community Commission

Harvey Hill and Eric LaForest, members of the Beloved Community Commission, made a presentation regarding the resolution coming before Diocesan Convention in October, *A commitment to healing the legacy of slavery and racism through an act of atonement*.

The Council was dismissed at 4:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wende T. Wheeler, Secretary

Recommended policies from the Human Resources Committee of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts

Presented to Diocesan Council September 28, 2023

Health Insurance Policy:

- Employees must meet specific requirements as defined by policy to be eligible to enroll in the Diocese's group health and dental plan.
- If an eligible employee waives group coverage with the Diocese due to having access to coverage elsewhere, they are entitled to receive additional compensation as follows:

Single - \$6,000 annually

Plus One - \$9,000 annually

Family - \$12,000 annually

- The additional compensation will be included in the retirement benefit calculation for both Clergy and Lay.

Policy Exceptions:

- Existing policies must be followed; otherwise will be considered an exception.
- Management override of a policy, without due process of approval, is considered to be a 'fraud risk'.
- All exceptions to existing policies must go through a formal approval process.
- If the exception relates to an employee benefit, approval of the exception must be presented to and approved by the Personnel Committee and then recommended to Council.
- If there are monetary considerations involved, B&FP Committee must be made aware of the exception and approve any additional cost.