Minutes from Assembly Mennonite Church Congregational Meeting
March 16, 2025, 7pm on Zoom

Minutes prepared by Scott Coulter, from the Zoom recording
Zoom recording link:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1r0laFAZLKqTQn3PojcklMZXLwi3XdMAf/view?usp=drive_link

Meeting Facilitated by Glenn Gilbert

Call to Order at 7:01pm

Glenn introduced the meeting agenda: Approval of job description for Office Administrator.
The fast pace of this approval process is because we need begin the job search to hire someone to replace the two people who are ending their roles (as Administrator and Admin Assistant) at the end of April.
The proposed job description was shared in advance of the meeting electronically. (**Link**)

Cheryl Shreiner (representing Leadership Group) introduced the proposal.
Maeve Smucker and Naomi Roots are both working in part-time administrative positions. Both are resigning at the end of April. Leadership Group believes that restructuring their responsibilities into one job description will better serve the needs of the congregation.

Scott Coulter (pastor of congregational life) described the proposal in more detail.
Scott shared these slides: (**Link**)

The proposal is to make this a three-quarter time (0.75 FTE) position, which is 30 hours/week.
The administrator job has gone through transition three times since July 2020. Naomi Roots resigned after 5 years, ending in July 2020. Jane Litwiller served from Aug 2020-June 2021. The position was vacant until Becky Overholt was hired in February 2022.
The job was separated into two roles in Jan 2022. The Administrator had primary responsibility for facility and finance, while the Administrative Assistant had primary responsibility for communications and program support.
Becky served as Admin Assistant Feb 2022-March 2024. Maeve Smucker has been Admin Assistant since May 2024, and is ending in April 2025.
Naomi Roots has been back in the Administrator job since March 2022 and is also ending in April 2025.
We have been very happy with our office team, and are sad that Maeve and Naomi are both resigning.

Reasons to restructure the job description include: simplicity of hiring and training one new staff person (not two), being able to offer health insurance benefits through the Corinthian Plan to a staff person hired at 0.75 FTE, making the position more attractive by offering benefits, reducing turnover in the position.

Estimated cost to the congregation for hiring this position: $47,500 including benefits.

This will cost the congregation at least $15,000 more in staffing costs (because we are offering benefits). This is about a 5.6% increase in our budget for staffing compared to the 2025 Spending Plan approved by the congregation in January.

Discussion

Q: Good idea to combine the two positions. Are the hours we are asking for appropriate for the tasks of the job? Were Naomi and Maeve consulted as the decision to set hours for the new staff position at 0.75 FTE?

Answer, Scott Coulter: Yes, Naomi and I thought current responsibilities would easily take at least 25 hours/week. We are also discussing moving additional responsibilities from the volunteer Treasurer to the paid Administrator. (This was the plan already before Maeve or Naomi announced their resignations.) I'm not concerned about finding work for the person to do to fill 30 hours per week.

Q: Has Finance Committee weighed in on the financial feasibility of this plan?

Answer, Scott Coulter: Via email communication with finance committee members, these questions were raised: (1) Do we really need 30 hours/week of staff time, or are we just increasing the hours in order to offer benefits? (2) Observation that this is a significant budget increase, but not opposed to taking this to the congregation for review. (3) Is it possible to provide benefits to an employee working 25 hours a week?

The financial cost compared to the 2025 Spending Plan has been noted in the proposal and should be considered by the congregation. Offering health insurance through the Corinthian Plan would require hiring someone at .75 FTE.

Q: What are our current scheduled office hours, and how would this change?

Answer, Scott Coulter: Maeve is currently in the office 9am-2pm Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. Naomi is currently in the office 9am-12pm Monday, Wednesday, Friday. We have someone in the office four weekdays.

What office hours might look like: Monday mornings, plus 6-7 hours/day Tues-Friday. We would still have someone in the office every weekday morning, and some afternoons.

Q: Did Naomi and Maeve ever cover for each other? Is this a downside to combining the positions? Who would cover for this person if they are on vacation or sick?

Answer, Scott Coulter: Yes, Naomi and Maeve cover for each other. Sometimes they also cover for themselves by making up time on a different day. On this proposal, covering sick days and vacation for the Office Administrator would require more from pastoral team and volunteers, or if someone took significant sick leave/parental leave, we would likely need to hire temp coverage, which would have additional costs. Routinely, I think we would close the office while the Office Administrator was on vacation.

Q: I appreciate the effort to provide benefits with our current social realities. Would you be looking to increase the hours in this way if benefits weren't an issue? Or would you be looking to increase the hours anyway? Both are valid reasons to propose the increase, but I'm asking.

Answer, Scott Coulter: If Corinthian Plan policy didn't require hiring staff at .75 FTE in order to offer health insurance benefits, we might be looking at hiring someone at 50% or 60% time. The reality at Assembly is that we have part-time staff and so we prioritize what will get done, and there are always things that don't get done because there isn't more staff time.

Q: Observation that under the Affordable Care Act, 30 hours/week is considered "full time" in terms of employers (with a certain number of employees) being required to provide health insurance.

Answer, Scott Coulter: Yes, although the congregation does not have enough employees to be legally required to offer health insurance.

Q: Some employers offer additional cash payment for a staff person to purchase their own health insurance. I wonder if our employee would be able to find equally good coverage in the market if we wanted them to be 25 hours/week instead of .75 FTE. Just an option to throw out there.

Answer, Scott Coulter: I had considered that option. We could look up the estimated cost of an average Silver Plan through the health care marketplace and offer to cover a percentage of that. I do have personal experience with being covered through the health care marketplace, and that can be stressful in a political climate where there is a lot of uncertainty about the health care marketplace. Yes, there are ways we could try to offer benefits apart from the Corinthian Plan.

Q: Extra hours could easily be filled up with tasks provided by volunteers like the Treasurer or Offering Manager.
Q: Offering health insurance benefits for a job brings a more qualified applicant pool.

Q: Making it be a "real job" with real benefits, that would make the job more attractive for a long-term job, and hopefully reduce turnover.

Glenn moved ahead with a test for consensus on the proposal. Members indicated how many "fingers" they put up in the chat.

Q: When was the first reading?

Glenn: Due to the necessity of moving this along quickly, we tried to treat the electronic distribution of the proposal as a "first reading" and go ahead and approve it at this meeting.

The proposal was approved by consensus, all 4s and 5s.

Glenn encouraged everyone to look for opportunities to express appreciation to Maeve and Naomi. Glenn thanked Scott and the Leadership Group for the work and thoughtfulness that went into this proposal.

Glenn adjourned the meeting at 7:34pm.