

**Episcopal Diocese of Montana**  
**Minutes of Diocesan Council Zoom Media Meeting**  
**November 12, 2022**

The Diocesan Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Montana held a video meeting via Zoom Media, beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 12, 2022.

**Attendance.** Council members present were The Rt. Rev. Marty Stebbins, The Rev. Randy Pendergraft, Jim Wiley, The Rev. Heidi Jones-Magee, Jenanne Solberg, Hank Tuell, The Rev. Chris Roberts, Jean Buer-Mott, Leo Schuman, The Rev. Mary Alice Jones, The Very Rev. Scott Anderson. Council members Rick Harden and The Rev. Terri Grotzinger were absent. In attendance were Mark Dvarishkis, Diocesan Treasurer; Barb Hagen, Canon for Finance & Administration; The Rev. Theresa Kelly Bergmann, The Rev. Janis Hansen and The Rev. Steve DeHart, members of the Congregational Development Commission.

**Call to Order / Bible Study.** With a quorum participating, Heidi Jones-Magee led the Bible Study with a reading from John 21: 15-17 and asked the group to reflect on the key words which spoke to them in this passage and how they related to congregational development.

**CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION REPORT.**

Janice Hansen, Jim Wiley, Chris Roberts, Heidi Jones-Magee and Steve DeHart began their report with an icebreaker. Council was then informed that this Commission is in their second year of work and The Rev. Connie Campbell-Pearson and Dave Campbell are also members. Drawing on Steve Dehart's months long Small Rural Church study, research and information from the New Science Leadership, and models depicting "ideal" vs "actual relationships between the Diocese and the Congregations, they discussed the importance of understanding the culture of the Diocese in moving towards a Diocesan-wide Strategic Plan. The Commission's recommendation to Council is the formation of a 6-7 member Congregational Development Task Force, which would report to Diocesan Council, to look at core values and goals as part of strategic planning. After a time of pondering this proposal, upon motion duly made by Chris Roberts and seconded by Jim Wiley, the motion to create a Congregational Development Task Force was passed 9 – 1.

### **ABATEMENT REQUEST FROM PHILIPSBURG.**

Theresa Kelly Bergmann presented Council with background information on the Pintler Cluster with specific focus on St. Andrew's in Philipsburg. Council received the request for an abatement. Later in the meeting, upon motion duly made by Randy Pendergraft and seconded by Chris Roberts, the motion to accept the abatement request was passed unanimously.

### **OLD BUSINESS - REQUIRES VOTE.**

**Minutes of October 15, 2022 meeting** Upon motion duly made by Jim Wiley and seconded by Hank Tuell, the Minutes of the October 15, 2022 Diocesan Council meeting were unanimously approved as written.

**Distribution Date of Endowment Income Policy.** Upon motion duly made by Chris Roberts and seconded by Randy Pendergraft, and after brief discussion, it was unanimously decided to set February 1<sup>st</sup> as the Distribution Date.

**St. Mark's, Havre.** Council heard a report from Bishop Marty regarding the status of St. Mark's. The Bishop is hoping to do a restart to this congregation. In the meantime, there has been a request by the Nazarene Church to use the building in exchange for love offerings and sweat equity such as lawn and garden care and snow removal. The Nazarene congregation must obtain a \$1,000,000 liability policy which has extension coverage to the Diocese of Montana. The Diocese will continue to pay the energy and water bills, taxes and building insurance. Upon motion duly made by Heidi Jones-Magee and seconded by Hank Tuell, followed by discussion, the Motion passed with 9 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 abstention.

### **OLD BUSINESS - RECEIVE INFORMATION.**

**Finance Department Minutes.** None this month

**Financial Statements.** Barb Hagen noted that in the October budget statement the administrative budget will not show investment information. That information will henceforward be found in a separate budget.

**Insurance Committee.** Tabled until January.

**Change in Meeting Schedule.** The March meeting of the Diocesan Council will occur on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### **NEW BUSINESS - REQUIRES VOTE.**

**Approval of Convention Minutes.** Jim Wiley noted one typo in the Rio Grande report section: feed and clothe not clothes. Jim also noted the need to change Latinx to Latina and to include the words a Native American Vice President in the section on the General Convention Report. Upon motion duly made by Chris and seconded by Mary Alice Jones, Council unanimously approved on the Minutes as corrected.

**Revised Cost Share Agreement with St. Peter's.** Upon motion duly made by Jim Wiley and seconded by Hank Tuell, the revised Agreement regarding shared expenses such as snow removal, lawn acre and irrigation was unanimously approved.

**Request from Ecumenical Officer.** The Rev. Valerie Webster submitted a request for an allocation of \$2,000.00 to cover the cost of a workshop on Christian Unity. There is \$6,000.00 available in the program grant line item. Upon motion duly made by Leo Schuman and seconded by Hank Tuell, the allocation was unanimously approved.

**Discussion of timing of 2022 Audit.** With the pending retirement of the Canon for Finance it was recommended that the audit be performed earlier than usual, despite an increase in cost. Jim moved, Randy seconded and Council unanimously approved of having the audit occur on January, 2023. [Upon conclusion of this discussion Mark Dvarshkis left the meeting].

#### **NEW BUSINESS - RECEIVE INFORMATION.**

**2023 Budget.** Council was informed that due to a \$9,000.00 reduction in assessment from The Episcopal Church and a lower-than-expected increase in health insurance costs there is an additional \$13,000.00 in the budget.

**Discussion of Worship Times and the Diocesan website.** Worship Times is in the process of updating our website. (the "new" website) and has been asked to give us a proposal to provide more social media and communications assistance. Bishop Marty gave an overview of their proposal. More options are also going to be reviewed.

**Incarnation, Great Falls.** Council heard a brief report from Bishop Marty about the Church-wide difficulty in finding part-time interims. The Rev. Glen Gleaves is serving as Incarnation's interim Interim.

**Policy Revision Sub-Group Report.** Jean Buer-Mott and Barb Hagen led the reporting. There are three areas under revision: credit card policy; expense reimbursement guidelines; staff reimbursement. *See attached.* Upon motion duly made by Leo Schuman and seconded by Jim Wiley Council unanimously approved of the revisions.

**Church Audits.** Barb reported that all audits were in. Comments were included with some of the audits. A Diocesan Audit Team will assist St. John's, Butte with their 2022 audit this next year. Bishop Marty will inform their Cluster Missioner. It was noted that enforcement canons were tabled at the Convention and that the Legislative Committee would begin their work anew in January. [Upon conclusion of this discussion Jenanne Solberg left the meeting]

**Province VI.** Our Diocese sends one lay representative and one clerical representative to Provincial meetings. Gretchen Swift is the lay person. Council needs to appoint a clergy person to represent the Diocese.

**Personal Update from Bishop Marty.** Bishop Marty reported that the Leading Women conference was excellent. She noted that her out-of-State travel is over now and she will be concentrating on finalizing up her 2022 Visitations.

**Upcoming Diocesan Council Meeting Dates for 2023 – all via Zoom unless noted**

- January 14
- March 18
- May 13
- July 15 – in person
- August 12
- October 21 orientation and possible extra meeting (please hold the date)
- November 11

**Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Laura Z. Catlin*

Episcopal Diocese of Montana  
Credit Card and Debt Policy for congregations  
Approved by Diocesan Council on: 11/12/2022

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As approved by the Standing Committee on 9/8/2016, any debt in excess of \$5000 (copier lease etc.) requires written permission of the Bishop and Standing committee.

Congregations may have credit cards with limits not to exceed \$2500 per card and no more than two per congregation, and the card must be in the name of the church (though it may also include the name of the individual). The vestry shall approve who is authorized to sign on the credit card.

Limits may be raised for a short period of time with vestry approval (up to \$5000) as needed but shall be decreased to the \$2500 limit when the need for extended funds is over (and no longer than three months). For term longer than three months, written permission of the Bishop and Standing Committee is required (see above).

Credit card bills shall be paid in full each month. Receipts shall be given to the treasurer with the expense item noted on the receipt within 60 days. The vestry or their designee shall review the credit card statement each month. If receipts are not provided within 60 days, the total of missing receipts becomes taxable income to the person who has not provided receipts. If the employee continues to not provide receipts over a three month period, the employee's access to the credit card should be removed and the credit card privilege revoked.

If the credit card provides rebates or cash back or any type of incentive, the funds from incentives are returned to the church's funds and not an employee benefit.

## Expense Reimbursement Guidelines 2022

As approved by Finance Department on:  
Diocesan Council – 11/12/2022

These guidelines pertain to all elected or appointed committee members and elected General Convention Deputies or alternates. Expenses must be submitted within 60 days of meeting/event for reimbursement and original receipts must accompany the request. ***If not submitted within 60 days, you will not be reimbursed per IRS requirements***

### Lodging:

1. Hotel expenses shall be reimbursed up to the per diem rate found on the site below:

<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>

2. Hotel expenses will be paid for those who are traveling 75 or more miles from home, unless prior approval of committee chair has been granted.
3. When commercial airfare is required, and the airport is more than 75 miles from the individual's home town; post lodging late night (after dark) or pre lodging early morning (before daylight) may be reimbursed in the airport's city regardless of distance to individual's residence with prior approval by the committee chair or event coordinator. This also applies to traveling to the destination. The extra night may be needed in the departing city for an early flight.
4. Laundry service (for a trip fewer than 5 days) and movie rentals are not reimbursed.
5. Pet fees for hotels are excluded from reimbursement.
6. Tips of up to \$5 per night for housekeeping staff may be reimbursed.

### Meal Reimbursement:

1. Receipts must accompany reimbursements unless using per diem – use link below to determine:
  - a. <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>
2. Wine and other alcohol are excluded from reimbursement.
3. Tips are included up to 20% of the meal cost, not including alcoholic drinks.

### Travel Reimbursement:

1. When flying on commercial airlines The most economical means (coach fare) of transportation is expected and will be reimbursed. Non-commercial flying will only be reimbursed with prior approval of the Bishop or ecclesiastical authority .

2. When driving, mileage is paid for elected or appointed Diocesan volunteers at either 14 cents per mile, the current IRS mileage rate or actual costs with original receipt. Where appropriate, 1099s will be provided by the Diocese.
3. Commercial airline tickets should be purchased at least two weeks in advance. If the cost is more than driving prior approval by the Bishop or the Ecclesiastical Authority is required.
4. Carpool with other members from your area whenever possible.
5. If the volunteer, staff member, or deputy chooses to drive, they will be reimbursed at 14 cents per mile, the current IRS mileage rate, or actual gas expenses for the most direct route up to the amount of what the airfare would have cost. Motels and meals will be covered for car travel, only to the extent of the difference between the costs of car travel vs. airfare. Original receipts must accompany reimbursement.

#### General Convention Deputies:

Reserve funds are set aside for the General Convention deputies each year. A set amount is available for each deputy as determined by the Diocesan Council.

General convention deputies will be reimbursed for their airfare. The registration fee is paid by the diocese directly. Hotel is selected by the diocese. If a deputy chooses to use a different hotel, they will pay for it themselves. The meal expenses will be based on the per diem for the area where General Convention is held. If deputies choose to give receipts for meals instead of the per diem rate, they will be reimbursed as funds are available

For the current per diem rate information, click the link below. .

[Per Diem Rates | GSA](#) .

Per Diem funds will be paid to the deputies prior to travel. Receipts are not required for per diem.

No additional expenses are paid beyond the airfare, registration fee, and the per diem for the days the deputies travel to and from and attend the General Convention.

## Staff Reimbursement Guidelines – 2022

Approved by Diocesan Council 11/12/2022

Staff are reimbursed mileage at the current IRS rate. Log of business miles must be submitted within 60 days or will not be reimbursed. Staff with diocese owned vehicles are required to report any personal mileage used on those vehicles each year.

Credit card receipts will be provided within 60 days to the Canon for Finance & Administration with the expense noted on the receipt. If receipts are not submitted within 60 days, the credit card privilege can be revoked.

Expenses for spouses/domestic partners are not reimbursed.

Information below is from the Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs, Section IV:

Amounts received by an employee under an “accountable plan” are not required to be included as compensation on Form W-2. An accountable plan must meet three criteria:

1. There must be a business connection for the expenses;
2. The expenses must be substantiated in writing to the employer within a reasonable period of time not to exceed 60 days after expenses are incurred; and
3. The employee must return amounts in excess of the substantiated expenses within a reasonable period not to exceed 120 days after expenses are paid or incurred. An accountable plan should be in writing and adopted by the governing body.

The following guidelines apply for claiming reimbursement for various types of travel and other business-related, out-of-pocket expenses under an accountable expense reimbursement plan:

- Reimbursement at no more than the standard mileage rate established by the Internal Revenue Service for business mileage (excluding personal and commuting miles). Tolls and parking fees are additional to the mileage rate. In lieu of the standard mileage rate, actual automobile expenses allocated to actual business miles driven can be claimed. (Note: Since the 1980s, the IRS charitable mileage rate has remained unchanged at 14 cents per mile. If a diocese reimburses its volunteers at more than 14 cents per mile, any excess reimbursement that exceeds \$600 annually must be reported through an IRS Form 1099 as taxable income to the volunteer. In 2019, this would be necessary when the volunteer is reimbursed for more than 1,369 miles: IRS business allowance is \$0.58 (2019 rate) minus charitable allowance of \$0.14 equals an excess reimbursement of \$0.44; \$0.44 times 1,369 miles equals \$601. The \$1 excess is reportable taxable income.); This will be adjusted as the IRS rate changes.



- Reimbursement of travel reasonable and customary expenses away from home to conduct work or business. Examples are transportation fares, meals and lodging, cleaning and laundry expenses, and telephone. Deductions may be limited if the travel is extravagant, part of a vacation, or for travel outside the United States. Original supporting documentation is required for expenditures of \$75 or more. United States government per diem rates may apply in some instances for meals and lodging;

- Business gifts (up to but not exceeding \$25.00 per person); education expenses (if required by the employer or by law or regulation to maintain a salary, status, or job, or to maintain or improve the skills necessary to one's present work);

- Business expenses directly reimbursed for subscriptions and books related to the job; clothing that cannot take the place of ordinary clothing; business calls made on personal phones; professional memberships; licenses; and dues;

- Cell phones – recent legislation and IRS guidance has eliminated the need to quantify the amount of personal usage of cell phones provided by the Church or payment for cell phone service. Personal usage is now deemed de minimis as long as the Church has a policy stating that the provision of cell phones and/or payment of cell phone service fees are primarily for business purposes and it is expected that personal usage is minimal.

- Original documentation should be provided to the employer to support all expenses claimed by the employee. (The IRS exempts amounts below \$75, but most employers use a lower limit.)

Unsubstantiated business expenses paid to an employee in a "non-accountable plan" must be included on Form W-2 as wages paid to an employee. These wages are subject to Federal withholding and Social Security and Medicare tax withholding if paid to non-clergy employees and to clergy, who choose to have Federal income tax withheld. Per Diem amounts in excess of Internal Revenue Service approved per diem rates must be included on the Form W-2.