

A special meeting of the Pastoral Relations Commission was held via Zoom Conference call on Tuesday, June 1, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Jim Allen, Ina Bromley (via telephone), Ed Gratton, Wayne Harris (Chair), Charlotte Hoy, Sharon MacDonald, Erin McIntyre, Karen McLean (Scribe), Janet Nield, Whit Strong, Linda Suddaby (11)

REGRETS: Patsy Henry (1)

CALL TO ORDER, OPENING PRAYER:

Chair Wayne called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m. and welcomed us all to this special Zoom call. The sole purpose of this meeting is to review the motions that had been presented at the Annual Meeting of EOORC on May 8, 2021 and returned to the Commission for further study and possible changes. Wayne offered a prayer to lead us into this time of church business.

BUSINESS:

After a brief discussion on process, it was agreed the Commission members should make every attempt to settle on recommendations today. Whit had prepared a list of comments from the recording of that section of the meeting and Wayne had done the same from the chat box. On review of these, concern was expressed that many of the comments indicated a lack of understanding about the policies and processes.

1) Communications Policy

It was agreed unanimously to recommend the following to Executive:

“that the EOORC PR Commission recommends to the Executive a minimum allowance of one thousand dollars per year (\$1000/yr.) for a communications (telephone/internet) package for all calls and appointments. This amount is not to be pro-rated. The pastoral charge may meet this requirement either by making payments upon the submission ~~if~~ of receipts or by providing and paying for the necessary communications devices. This policy will come into effect on January 1, 2022,”

[Note: While *the Manual 2021* section I.2.1.6 simply states “the community of faith is responsible for providing the minister with a telephone”, it is suggested a comment be added as a preamble to the motion to explain that ‘communications’ is a package and does not mean just a phone.

2) Continuing Education Policy

On May 8, 2021 the following motion was passed by EOORC:

2021-05-7-8_48 MOTION (R. Lambie/B. Harman) “that the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council adopt the policy that Continuing Education and Travel be reimbursed based on the submission of receipts rather than a set amount being paid on a monthly basis.” Carried

It was noted that both methods are actually legal and accepted by CRA. This needs to be part of the call/appointment agreement and should be clearly identified on the form under “additional comments”. It is important to clarify that, if a minister opts to receive the \$1200 con-ed allowance as monthly payments and then doesn't use all of it, the balance then becomes taxable income.

In addition, the con-ed allowance may be pro-rated but *not* the *time* for con-ed or vacation time.

3) License to Administer the Sacraments Policy

On May 8, 2021 the following motions were passed by EOORC:

2021-05-7-8_46 MOTION (B. Reynolds/E. Lucaks) that the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council adopt the License to Administer the Sacraments Policy as circulated from preamble policy and remove the section ‘The Regional Council part, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, for further discussion and consultation with all communities of faith, in particular those that are especially affected. Carried

2021-05-7-8_47 MOTION (R. Lambie/B. Harman) that the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council adopt the License to Administer the Sacraments Policy as amended. Carried

So, the Commission is considering only the sections 1-5 from the Regional Council part.

The Regional Council

- 1 Recognizes that the office of Sacraments Elder was intended for exceptional circumstances, such as the community of faith being considered remote, in that there are no other ministry personnel available with a reasonable distance of the community of faith who are able and willing to administer the Sacraments. (*From Minimum Salaries & Reimbursements for Ministry Personnel (2021)* A location is considered remote if at least one of the following apply: • No all-weather road access, and no/very limited scheduled air or rail passenger services; • All-weather road access, however, over 250 km (or 2.5 hours' drive via Mapquest) from a population centre more than 5,000.)

The absence of a settled, called or appointed minister on a community of faith does not, in itself, trigger the licensing of a Sacraments Elder.

- 2 The Pastoral Relations Commission confirm the need for a Sacraments Elder and the suitability of the proposed person before the training takes place. The Regional Council Executive may not concur with the recommendations.
- 3 The Sacraments Elders Workbook will be the principal guide for instruction on the administration of the sacraments. The Pastoral Relations Minister shall be responsible to provide the training. The training is approximately 16 to 20 hours, timing to be divided between two to four modules with sufficient time between them for reflection.
- 4 The Pastoral Relations Commission will recommend appointing an ongoing mentor, potentially the pastoral charge supervisor.

- 5 Upon completion of this process, the Pastoral Relations Commission will bring a motion to the Regional Council Executive for action.

As expected, this generated considerable discussion. The main “sticking point” appears to be #1 regarding the remote distance requirement. Over the course of the rest of the meeting, the discussion ranged from what the policy was, what is now proposed, how it is administered across the country, whether it is any longer relevant in its present form and so on.

It was particularly noted that our context has changed over the years and so the policy must also change. It was set at a time when remoteness was an issue. Now it is different – what is our issue now?

This is also being considered by a task force which is to report to GC44 in 2022? Is there wisdom in waiting to see if a decision is rendered there?

It was agreed to take some time to think about the conversation from today and to continue the discussion at our next meeting on June 8th.

NEXT MEETING: Next meeting - June 8, 2021 **9:30 a.m. – note change in time** via Zoom

CLOSING: Wayne thanked everyone for attending and offered special thanks to our “consulting” members Ed Gratton and Janet Nield for their wisdom and thoughtful insights. We will keep them in the loop as we proceed. Sharon offered our closing prayer today. The business of the Commission being completed, Chair Wayne declared the meeting closed at 2:42 p.m.