

**WOLFVILLE AREA INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL
ANNUAL MEETING - MINUTES
29 May 2013
Wolfville Baptist Church**

The Annual Meeting of WAICC took place at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, 29 May 2012 in Wolfville Baptist Church.

There were 20 people present

President Penni Burrell called the meeting to order and welcomed those present.

Regrets received from Keith Churchill and Randy Crozsmann

The meeting opened with a few moments of silence

1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Acceptance of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of 9th May 2012 as circulated moved Allison Trites/Nancy Burbidge and carried.

2 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Penni's report had been circulated prior to the meeting as follows:

It has been a privilege for me to serve as Chair of WAICC for the past year. My commitment to this organization is very strong. When I first moved here and attended my first WAICC meeting, I felt I had met kindred spirits. This group is one that serves the Wolfville community ecumenically and through service to those in need in a dignified way. WAICC recognizes the essential nature of direct social justice work, through the Food Bank, the program tonight, and many other ventures historically.

This last year has been one of ups and downs. We have had meetings with a small number of people and others with well over a dozen. Our goal is to make the meetings not just of obligation but where members can receive spiritual support. As a result we have experimented with our meeting structure to enable more in depth sharing.

We have witnessed the challenges and offered support to the United Church through its transition from five organizations to one. As our church membership reduces in many of our congregations, we see Orchard Valley Pastoral Charge leading the way forward in demonstrating increased strength as well as losses of key structures such as St. Andrews. We recognize this lack of local Sunday services, but also have been blessed by the increased support through clergy in taking lead roles in some of our annual activities.

Over the last year we have had the following activities.

Ecumenically, we offered the following services

- Week of prayer for Christian Unity. As has become our tradition, we had a 'pulpit exchange' the first Sunday and a joint service the second Sunday. Contributions by Fr. Craig Cameron and Rev. Randy Crozsmann, both new to our Council were greatly appreciated.
- Good Friday walk with the cross. For the first time in a significant number of years, it was held in Port Williams. The turnout was high, and the program was profoundly moving by many who attended.

On the social justice part of our service we supported the following:

- Good news that the "Friends of Jane" financial and emotional support was extremely successful. The goal of supporting Jane to prevent her deportation was joyfully met. She has been allowed to continue to obtain the education she wishes to for her future. As reflected in the extensive article in the local press, the chance of Jane's application being accepted was extremely slim. The success of this is a tribute to the Wolfville community, its ability to pull together the necessary resources to create this success. WAICC was pleased to be a part of this process. It is what many of us believe organizations such as WAICC are geared for.
- Continued our support of the Food Bank, school supply and food programs in local schools. The not so good news, as reflected in financial statement is that these needs continue to increase in our community. Thank you to the extremely dedicated work of the Food Bank volunteers and committee.
- Wrote a letter to the Minister of Public Safety regarding the cancellation of the part time prison Chaplain program. Thank you Keith Churchill for leading this project.
- Very recently a yearlong focus on addressing the need for youth for a drop in program Friday nights has been begun. We are running a pilot program over May and June for Middle School children in conjunction with the Wolfville Recreation Centre. We are very pleased with this partnership. You will learn more about this program at your local church over the next month, through an awareness campaign after services for one Sunday per church. Our commitment to delivering this service in an ecumenical manner, with the goal of supporting youth as they go through challenging times was carefully crafted. It is our hope to start a more enhanced program in the fall, using the input from the youth as the basis for our proposed group. Reverend Sandra Fyfe, Andy Pitter, Joan Boutlier, Anne Cameron and I were the core committee members.
- Tonight's program "I Was In Jail and You..." is our first public program in a number of years. We are pleased to offer this to the Wolfville area.

We are in challenging times. We have many ideas and needs to serve. However, our active executive membership is dwindling, and we need to refocus our work. I want to thank Diana Shelley and Maurice Tugwell particularly for their years of strong guidance and dedication to this worthy organization.

Finding ways to adapt to these changes can be strengthened by our commitment to following the voice of God/Spirit. I ask you to consider how we can support you and your needs for spiritual sustenance and how you can support others in these transitional times.

In friendship
Penni Burrell

Penni mentioned that subsequent to preparing her report she had been informed by Margaret Burton, who last year had agreed to a one year term as Vice President, that she has reluctantly decided that she must resign from this position due to a heavy load in other parts of her life. WAICC will therefore be actively looking for a VP. Penni also gave emphasis to the youth initiative programme – as mentioned in her report, the programme is running four Friday evening pilot sessions which are now underway. Further report will follow at the next meeting.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT and BUDGET

Copies of Year-end Financial Statement to 31 March 2013 circulated by Maurice Tugwell, Treasurer. Maurice commented on one or two points in the financial report. Acceptance of report moved by Maurice Tugwell/Sandra Fyfe. Carried

Copies of proposed budget 2013-14 were circulated. Subsequently to Maurice's preparing the Annual Statement to end of fiscal year, 31 March 2013, the Food Bank was awarded an \$8,000.00 grant from the EKM Foundation. This good news meant that a smaller transfer from capital to operating accounts had been necessary. Acceptance of Budget moved by Maurice Tugwell/Sandra Fyfe. Motion carried. Copies of both of these reports attached with Minutes

4. FOOD BANK REPORT

Food Bank report prepared by Nancy Burbidge, Co-Chair of WAFB was circulated prior to the meeting as follows:

In February '13, the Wolfville Area food Bank celebrated its 6th anniversary; those involved looked back on 6 years of steadily increasing numbers of clients, and steadily increasing prices for food – but at the same time, growing numbers of committed volunteers. Throughout this time, those at the food bank have been greatly encouraged by the unfailing support shown by Wolfville Baptist Church.

Between January and December 2012, there were 1538 visits to the food bank, an increase of 25% over the previous year; the number is higher again for the same period this year. The visits were made by 247 different groups – 101 were single people, and 101 of the others, either couples or parents on their own, included children. It should be noted that our contact with clients does not stop at just providing food – every attempt is made to enable them to access sources of other help – such as Canada Learning Bonds for their children or costly dental care, or with assisting in filing tax returns. WAICC's discretionary funds have been very helpful with some of these needs – eg. obtaining the necessary birth certificates for the Bonds.

In 2012, a project of Professor Barbara Anderson's class in Community Nutrition helped us focus on healthy food for children. This concern to provide as nutritious food as possible was greatly helped by a grant of \$4,000 from the EKM Health Foundation – the focus being healthy snack packs for children; we have recently received \$8,000 from the Foundation, this time to focus on more healthy food for the whole family.

Individuals and businesses in Wolfville and the surrounding areas have continued to most generously support the food bank – with both funds and donated food, and groups such as the Rotary Clubs and the Acadia students have facilitated a great deal of help. There are now close to 90 volunteers doing a number of different tasks; in the month of March '13 alone, these volunteers gave a total of 1002 hours.

Finally, a note re misuse of the food bank, about which there are infrequent questions from the community. Misuse has been extremely rare, but as with any group of people, it can happen. To prevent it absolutely, an atmosphere of fear and distrust would likely be created. Those at the food bank have consciously chosen to create an atmosphere of love, trust and acceptance, and are confident that this in fact will foster appropriate use.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Burbidge, Co-chair

Acceptance of Food Bank Report moved David Garrett/Maurice Tugwell and motion carried.

Nancy Burbidge as current co-chair of the Food Bank Committee, expressed warm appreciation for Diana Shelley's patience and dedication as chair over the last three years.

5. FRIENDS OF JANE

Report had been circulated as follows:

As the Advertiser so well said, Jane has had a life returned. There were many threads that wove together to make that possible for her...Friends of Jane, Lee Cohen, Acadia, Wolfville Baptist Church, the Wolfville community and beyond, and most certainly WAICC. Not allowed to work to support herself, Jane was entirely dependent upon the generosity of others. And that generosity was overwhelming! Because WAICC included her in their outreach, you were a large part of her ability to return to Acadia.

Of course, financial help alone is never enough to change a life. Jane has worked hard. She has been processing her grief; coping with homesickness; studying diligently; and giving back to the community in many ways. Last May she graduated with a degree in Computer Science (all A's); she was offered a Graduate Study Award; and in September began a Master's program in Computer Science.

On March 21, 2013 Canada Border Services Agency delivered to Jane and her lawyer Lee Cohen, a positive response to her Humanitarian and Compassionate Application. That meant the end of dark years of uncertainty. She would not be immediately removed to Bangladesh, and can now apply to become a Permanent Resident of Canada. Thanks be to God.

She is now in a Co-op Program for 8 months in Calgary. Imagine her excitement at receiving her first pay cheque and living into her independence. She will return in January to continue her thesis work.

In addition to a general statement of gratitude to WAICC for your foresight and grace, I would like on behalf of myself, Jane, and Friends of Jane, to say a specific thank you to Maurice Tugwell who handled the finances with such kindness.

What began with a prayer and a relationship between Jane and I, grew and blossomed in almost miraculous ways to become a host of companions along the way.

Jane and I are profoundly grateful,

Judith Tod

Diana reported that Jane has settled in well in her co-op job and to life in general in Calgary and very positive emails have been received from her. She reiterated the deep gratitude from Jane, the Friends of Jane and all involved with Jane for the wonderful support given by WAICC. Adoption of Friends of Jane report moved by Allison Trites/Sharon Doyle. Motion carried.

There being no further business, adjournment moved by David Garrett.

Barry Morrison closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Gene Trites
Diana Shelley
Secretaries

Date of next meeting TBA

Following the business meeting the group moved to the sanctuary to hear an excellent presentation by Dr. Pierre Allard. His talk was entitled "I Was in Prison and You . . .?" Approximately 60 people attended.