

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL SUB-EXECUTIVE

MINUTES

Monday, February 3, 2025 (video conference call)

The Sub-Executive of the General Council of The United Church of Canada held a meeting by video conference call on Monday, February 3, 2025.

Voting Members: Michael Blair, Richard Bott, Teresa Burnett-Cole, M Chorney, Carmen Lansdowne

Resource: Diane Bosman, Alan Hall

Welcome

The Moderator opened the meeting of the Sub-Executive and constituted the meeting.

Constituting the Meeting

"Au nom de Notre Seigneur, Jésus-Christ, seul chef souverain de l'Église, et par l'autorité qui m'a été conférée par le quarante-quatrième Conseil général, I hereby declare this meeting of the Sub-Executive of the General Council to be in session for the work that may properly be brought before it to the glory of God."

Procedural Motions

The Moderator invited Michael Blair, General Secretary, to introduce the opening motion. The General Secretary briefly outlined the various items contained in GS 119 Procedural and Consent.

Motion: Michael Blair /Teresa Burnett-Cole

2025-02-03-162

The General Secretary proposes that the Sub-Executive of the General Council Executive:

1. Approve the [minutes](#) of the Sub-Executive of the General Council Executive meeting held October 08, 2024.
2. Adopt the agenda for this meeting as circulated, with any changes which may be necessary as the meeting evolves, to be made on the recommendation of the Business Committee.
3. Name as the Business Committee: the Moderator, General Secretary, and Administrative Assistant Governance Support.
4. Name as corresponding members to this meeting those named by the General Secretary to serve as resource persons to the General Council Executive.

Approved Motion 2025-12-09-037

5. Approve the following proposals:

- GS 120 Appointment of Director, Bridge Street Foundation
- GS 121 Harrington Harbour Pastoral Charge Property Sale
- GS 122 Appointment of Canadian Ecumenical member to Partner Council (2022-2025)
- GS 123 Amendments to Sections Where Sexual Misconduct Policy is Used
- GS 124 Amendment to Section J.12.1
- NOM 15 Recommendations for Appointment

Carried

GS 125 PROTOCOL FOR BACKGROUND REVIEW OF NOMINEES FOR MODERATOR

The Moderator invited the General secretary to introduce GS 125 Protocol for Background Review of Nominees for Moderator. The General Secretary gave some background to the work done on the proposal and invited Alan Hall, Executive Minister, Shared Services, to provide further insight and information regarding the proposal.

Alan noted the considerations and process that led the formation of the proposal. He also mentioned and thanked Éric Hébert-Daly, Regional Council Executive Minister East Central Ontario, Eastern Ontario Outaouais, Nakonha:ka, Lori-Ann Livingston, Press and Public Relations Lead, Diane Bosman, Program Coordinator, Member Engagement for their hard work.

Alan stated that this proposal was not to keep a potential nominee off the ballot, but to explore, with the nominee, the potential for there being activities or positions that would be controversial and troublesome, causing distress and distraction for both nominee and the United Church if they became public. It was highlighted that, using the time between nominations and the vote, the General Council Office is prepared to support the nominee and manage reputational risk to the United Church, and provide a point of further discernment for nominee.

The Moderator invited the Sub-Executive to bring forward any questions.

The Sub-Executive notes that this proposal is a way of practicing transparency in the discernment for moderator.

Motion: Michael Blair /Richard Bott

2025-02-03-163

It is proposed that the sub-Executive:

Whereas the role of Moderator of The United Church of Canada is the most visible leadership position in the denomination, it attracts public scrutiny of both institutional/denominational and personal integrity. Interviewing nominees and doing background reviews for purposes of transparency is intended to contribute to the discernment process, ensuring that the individual can serve faithfully in the role and that the church can live out its call without undue distress or distraction related to subsequent disclosures that may call into question the nominee's or the church's integrity.

Approved Motion 2025-12-09-037

1. adopt the following protocol:

Nominees be required to self-disclose to a third-party reviewer any:

- criminal convictions;
- professional representations;
- restrictions still in place because of a church disciplinary process;
- public statements made in the last five years not in alignment with the church's established values of seeking justice and reconciliation, becoming an inclusive, anti-racist, and inter-cultural church, and essential agreement with the faith and doctrine of the denomination.
- potentially controversial personal positions or relationships.

The third-party reviewer will undertake an independent review of public records and media resources.

A report on findings will be made to the Executive Officer, Shared Services, and the Director of Human Resources of the General Council. They will review the report with the nominee. If there are flags, the Executive Officer and Director will engage the nominee in conversation to understand the contexts of the issue and explore the potential consequences/implications of the matter becoming public. From this conversation, the nominee may choose to withdraw the nomination, and the report will be closed.

If the nominee chooses to proceed with the nomination, and the concerns of the Executive Officer and Director have not been resolved, the General Secretary will be advised of the findings and context. The General Secretary will develop, with appropriate staff, a media strategy for when or if the matter becomes public. In extreme circumstances, if the General Secretary feels that the matter is material to the decision-making of the Commissioners, the General Secretary will consult with the Sub-Executive of the General Council, which will decide how to appropriately disclose the findings to the Commissioners as part of their consideration of the suitability of the nominee.

The use, retention and disclosure of personal information collected through this process is done in compliance with all applicable federal and provincial privacy legislation and adheres to the principles of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (S.C. 2000, c. 5).

It is noted that while this process is applicable to nominees for Moderator, the practice when appointing a General Secretary involves a rigorous process of recruitment, review, and assessment by a search committee, appointed by the Executive of the General Council and resourced by an external executive search firm, before a candidate is recommended to the Executive.

2. and direct the General Secretary to engage a third-party reviewer, at arm's length from the church, to manage the review process.

Carried

Closing Prayer

The Moderator thanked all those present for their presence and input in the meeting and closed the meeting in prayer.

Moderator, Carmen Lansdowne

General Secretary, Michael Blair