

Regional Council Commission Report

When it became clear that the church, through its remits, wished to move in a new direction a Remit Implementation Task Group was formed to help the church move forward into the new structure. The Remit Implementation Task Group proposed that commissions be appointed for each regional council to do significant planning prior to January 1, 2019. This would enable the regional councils to be functional on that date, and to have a governing structure.

The process for appointing a transitional commission was laid out in a letter from the General Secretary to Conference Presidents/Presidents-Elect/Leading Elders, presbytery chairs and secretaries, and co-chairs of the Aboriginal Ministries Council on April 4, 2018:

“There will be 16 commissions in total, one for each regional council. Each Conference worked in its own way to name the members of their respective commission.”

The Commission Members chosen by the Maritime Conference for Region 15 were:

Regional Council #15: Krista Anderson; Ross Bartlett; Anne Cameron; Alicia Cox; William Drysdale; Derek Elsworth; Alison Etter; Ruth Gamble; Elaine Gray; Peter Hardy; April Hart; David LeBlanc; Catherine MacDonald; Beverley McDonald; Donnie Morrison; Carol Smith; Fay Smith; Janet Sollows; Donna Tourneur; Joyce Wylie

The names of the commission members were forwarded to the General Secretary and the Remit Implementation team, and the commission were asked to begin their work immediately. The Commission for Region 15 began meeting in June of 2018 as a transition committee to help evaluate what was needed in order to fulfill its mandate.

At the General Council in July 2018, when the final vote on the remits took place, the Commission was formally named and the Commission was then the body to set up the new Regional Council and to make sure it had what it needed to begin functioning on January 1st, 2019.

The commissions were mandated to:

- a) function as the Executive of the regional council from January 1, 2019 until such time as the regional council meets and elects a new Executive; and**
- b) make decisions on such items as in the commission’s opinion are necessary to allow for the immediate functioning of the regional council on January 1, 2019;**
- c) make decisions on the following items:**
 - any required actions regarding staff who will serve the regional council;
 - a regional council budget for 2019;
 - mission support grants for 2019;
 - a preliminary Memorandum of Understanding between the regional councils being served by a single Executive Minister;
 - a plan for how the Executive Minister will come to know the regional councils;
 - whether to have a getting-acquainted gathering in 2018 (optional);
 - property matters formerly done by presbyteries or Conferences, with the regional council serving as the successor to the presbytery, and performing the

- functions of the presbytery, in all property transactions involving congregations and pastoral charges within the bounds of the regional council;**
- **a date and organizing a founding meeting for the regional council not later than June 30, 2019;**
 - **any unfinished business from presbyteries/Districts, including approval of final minutes and Records of Proceedings;**

and propose plans for addressing the following potential topics:

- **a vision for the regional council;**
- **the composition of the regional council's governing body;**
- **a process and timeline for determining the longer term governance of the regional council following the interim period filled by the commission;**
- **nominations policies;**
- **frequency and times of regional council meetings;**
- **a process for selecting a name for the regional council;**
- **a plan regarding current resource centres, if applicable.**

The Regional Commission needed to make the changes necessary to comply with the decisions made by the church through remits and approved at General Council in July 2018. It is understood that the governance structure designed by the Commission is a working document and as the new executive takes over at the rise of the Regional Council meeting it can and will make changes as necessary.

Staffing decisions were made and communicated and all staff began their positions in January of 2019. The 2019 budget was developed and approved by the Regional Council Commission and we have been have been operating with that budget since January 2019. Mission Support Grant applications were received and approved accordingly. Those ministries who received money from presbyteries/districts were contacted and encouraged to submit an application for Mission Support Grants knowing district/presbytery money would not be available in the regional system. It was our hope to make sure that ministries did not feel the repercussions of the change in church structure.

In October of 2018, the three Regional Council Commissions gathered in Sackville, New Brunswick to do some further work; meet new staff people; hear about the possibilities that the staff have for their new positions; and develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the three Regions and their shared staff. We spent time with a Mr. George, an Indigenous PhD student, who taught us about systems built on colonial values, and gave us food for thought as we continued to develop our governance structures.

The Regional Council Commission set the date for the Regional Council inaugural meeting and provided the committees necessary for its planning.

The Commission has operated as the Executive of the Regional Council, receiving requests for all matters that came before it, in the hope that no decision was delayed, especially with respect to pastoral relations and property matters. The Mission, Vision, and Core Values statement were developed from work done by the Commission, facilitated by Laura Hunter and will be discussed at the Regional Council meeting.

In naming the Region, we have solicited name suggestions for our Region and will be selecting a name at the Regional Meeting. The Nomination policy and process is up and running and we are currently looking for people to fill our Divisions and Committees and ask people to prayerfully consider serving where you feel your gifts and skills can be best used.

The Regional Council is responsible to meet annually, but how we do that is up to the Region to decide. While we are in the midst of change, we are recommending that the Regional Council have full Regional meetings for the next three years, 2019, 2020, 2021. This will provide an opportunity to build relationships between our Regions and our Communities of Faith. Future directions will need to be decided, and we will begin discussions at this meeting about the possibilities.

The Nominations Committee will be presenting the names of the Regional Council Executive at this inaugural meeting. At the rise of the Regional Meeting, the Council will give the Executive the power to act until the next Regional Council. The Regional Council, through the Division of Finance, is currently working on a new property policy and once complete will be forwarded to all Communities of Faith.

There has been a tremendous amount of work, time, and energy put forward by your Regional Council Commission. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their faithful dedication and exemplary leadership. The Commission will be disbanded and the new Executive will begin its work at the end of these meetings. A special thank you to our staff who, in the midst of uncertainty, have worked tirelessly with competence and grace to enable the transition into the new reality.

Congratulation Regional Council 15, for the journey thus far!

Faith March-MacCuish
Executive Minister
Regional Council 15