

Official Minutes
SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GREATER NEW JERSEY ANNUAL CONFERENCE
The Great Auditorium, Ocean Grove, New Jersey
September 27, 2014

OPENING WORSHIP

- 9:00 a.m. **Prelude** – Dr. Gordon Turk, Organist of the Ocean Grove Great Auditorium
- 9:03 a.m. **Call to Worship** – The Rev. Iraida Ruiz De Porras
- 9:04 a.m. **Hymns** – “On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand” and “Blessed Assurance”
- 9:09 a.m. **OGCMA Welcome** – The Rev. Dr. Gina Hendrickson introduced Dr. Dale Whilden, President of the Board of Trustees of the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association, who welcomed the annual conference to Ocean Grove.
- 9:12 a.m. **Gospel Lesson** – Rev. Gina Hendrickson read Matthew 5:14-16
- 9:13 a.m. **Bishop’s Welcome** – The Rev. Dr. John Schol, Bishop, greeted the annual conference and shared highlights of the A Future with Hope Mission Campaign
- 9:18 a.m. **Gospel Lesson** – Mrs. Rosa Williams, Conference Lay Leader, read Luke 14:28-30
- 9:19 a.m. **Sermon** – Bishop Schol preached on the theme “Count the Cost.” Bishop Schol challenged the annual conference to consider the challenges ahead, to learn to really listen to, value, and open our doors wide to those beyond the Church. Bishop Schol challenged the Annual Conference that this mission will come at a high cost. Bishop Schol concluded by remarking that the special session of the annual conference had been convened to get the count right and take up the challenge to make disciples, equip vital congregations, and transform the world.
- 9:30 a.m. **Hymn** – “Victory in Jesus”
- 9:34 a.m. **Words of Welcome** – Bishop Schol recognized and welcomed several special guests
- 9:36 a.m. **Benediction** – Bishop Schol gave the benediction for the opening worship service of the special session.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Call to Order

- 9:38 a.m. Bishop Schol called the special session of the annual conference to order and reminded the annual conference of the purpose of the special session: consideration of the “New Conference Center Resolution.”

Setting the Bar of the Special Session of the Annual Conference

- 9:39 a.m. The Rev. Dr. David Wiley, Conference Secretary, made a motion to define and set the bar of the annual conference for the special session.

The motion passed unanimously.

Motion to Extend the Time Allotted for Presentation

- 9:40 a.m. The Rev. Louis Strugala, Jr., Chair of the Conference Board of Trustees, made the motion to grant 35 minutes to the Board of Trustees for presentation of the “New Conference Center Resolution.” This motion was necessary because conference rules allow only five (5) minutes for the presentation of legislation.

The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation of the “New Conference Center Resolution”

- 9:40 a.m. Rev. Strugala introduced those who presented the “New Conference Center Resolution.”

- 9:43 a.m. The Rev. James Ryoo, Conference Trustee, presented an analysis of the current conference center facilities. Rev. Ryoo reminded the special session of the resolution passed by the 2013 Session of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference authorizing the Board of Trustees to replace the current facilities.
- 9:46 a.m. The Rev. Clifford Still, Sr., Conference Trustee, presented the rationale for the increase in budget for the purchase and construction of the new conference center.
- 9:47 a.m. Mr. Stephen Carlidge, Principal of Shore Point Architecture, provided an overview of the design of the new conference center interior, exterior, grounds and surrounding properties.
- 9:54 a.m. Mr. Jack Green, General Contractor and Principal of Jack Green Construction, made a presentation describing his selection as the general contractor; selection, purchase and wetlands study of the property; and the bidding process for the development and construction of the new conference center site and building.
- 9:57 a.m. Mr. John Bishop, Chair of the Council on Finance and Administration, presented rationale for increasing the initial expenditure on the purchase and construction of the new conference center including explanation of the impact on the budget of the annual conference.
- 10:05 a.m. Ms. Judy Hopkins, Conference Trustee, gave a presentation on the value of the new conference center from the standpoint of the mission and strategic vision of the annual conference.

Motion to Adopt the “New Conference Center Resolution”

- 10:10 a.m. Rev. Strugala summarized the presentation and made the motion to adopt the “New Conference Center Resolution” on behalf of the Board of Trustees. The resolution is attached as presented to the special session of the annual conference.

Discussion of the “New Conference Center Resolution”

- 10:11 a.m. Bishop Schol reminded the annual conference of the rules of discussion and of the bar of the special session of the annual conference. Bishop Schol reminded the annual conference that a second to the motion was not required since the motion was made by the Board of Trustees. Bishop Schol instructed the annual conference that each speaker would be allowed one question per time of recognition.

Summary of Initial Discussion

Speakers included: Nancy Reid (Lacey UMC, Forked River), Lee Schubert (Morristown UMC), David Yamoah (Roselle UMC), and Christina Zito (Red Bank UMC), John Cardillo (Conference Treasurer), Lou Strugala (Chair, Board of Trustees), Bishop Schol, and others.

Topics of discussion included: mortgage of the current conference center; mortgage of the new conference center; accountability for the inaccuracy of the original cost estimate for the new conference center; steps taken to contain future cost increase for the new conference center; funding A Future with Hope; the crises in Atlantic City; salary of conference staff and appointed pastors; retiree health benefits

Proposed Amendment to the “New Conference Center Resolution”

Mr. Creed Pogue (West Side UMC, Millville) proposed amendment of the “New Conference Center Resolution” by altering the “third resolved:”

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the conference share of the current HealthFlex dividend of \$500,000 be dedicated to financing this project.

To read:

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the conference share of the current HealthFlex dividend of \$500,000 be dedicated to meet the conference obligations under its plan for retiree health care in the next four budgets, and that the “local church share” of approximately \$800,000 be rebated to those local churches that fully paid their health insurance premiums in 2012 and 2013.

The motion to amend was seconded.

Creed Pogue presented rationale for the amendment including using the HealthFlex dividend to offset increases in healthcare expense and to fund mission and ministry by returning a portion of the dividend to local churches who have paid health insurance.

Bishop Schol ruled that the amendment was out of order because it digressed from the purpose of the special session of the annual conference. Bishop Schol reminded the annual conference that the *Book of Discipline* will only permit consideration of the question(s) for which the special session of the annual conference was convened.

Summary of Additional Discussion

Speakers included: Victor Peterson (Ridgewood UMC), Ruth London (Haddonfield UMC), Angel Bonilla (Asbury UMC, Camden), Kay Scott (New Beginnings UMC, Camden), Lou Strugala, Bishop Schol, Gina Hendrickson (Dean of the Cabinet), and others

Topics of discussion included: environmental/ecological responsibility; enlarging the conference center while conference membership is shrinking; potential reduction to conference staff; equipping the conference staff with a suitable facility and technology; contingencies and outcomes should the resolution fail; paragraph 213 studies; careful location of the conference center that takes into account demographic diversity

Proposed Amendment to the “New Conference Center Resolution”

Mr. Creed Pogue proposed an amendment of the “New Conference Center Resolution” by deleting the “third resolved:”

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the conference share of the current HealthFlex dividend of \$500,000 be dedicated to financing this project.

The motion to amend was seconded.

Creed Pogue presented rationale for the amendment/deletion including stressing the annual conference’s obligations to the local church and exploring the costs and benefits of different models for meeting those obligations.

John Cardillo rose to provide further information regarding the HealthFlex dividend, in that the dividend related to a positive loss ratio for healthcare claims history and the lack of predictability of that condition.

Bishop Schol ruled that a question from the floor about various uses of the dividend could not be discussed per the *Book of Discipline* since that question diverged from the stated purpose of the special session.

Ms. Evelyn Catterson (UMC at Absecon, Conference Chancellor, Committee on Rules, Committee on Episcopacy) and Rev. Lou Strugala spoke against the amendment.

Bishop Schol called for a vote on the amendment.

The amendment was not adopted.

Summary of Additional Discussion

Speakers included: Bret Walker (Ebenezer UMC, Auburn and Hudson UMC, Pedricktown), Mark Earl (Christ UMC, Lakewood), Joel Hubbard (Park UMC, Bloomfield), Peter Dewes (Little Falls UMC), Judy Colorado (Emanuel UMC, Springfield), Ed Carll (Denville Community UMC), Paul Zorn (Chair, Conference Board of Pensions), La Gretta Bjorn (Cadwalader-Asbury UMC, Trenton), Jack Green (General Contractor), Stephen Carlidge (Architect), John Cardillo (Conference Treasurer), Lynn Catterson (Chancellor), Lloyd Terrell (Franklin St. Johns UMC, Newark), Lou Strugala (Chair, Board of Trustees), Bishop Schol and others

Topics of discussion included: the decision to build a new conference center made at the 2013 Session of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference; the process for obtaining bids and estimating costs; the serious deficits and potential to update the existing conference building; local church indebtedness; priorities of the annual conference; funding A Future With Hope; the larger economic environment in New Jersey; options and potential changes to the architectural plan for the new conference center; the value of risk-taking to achieve conference mission, vision and goals; the importance of equipping and supporting conference staff; the HealthFlex dividend and funding of health benefit liabilities; contingencies should the “New Conference Center Resolution” fail; the timeframe and expiration of the budget contained in the “New Conference Center Resolution;” the requirements of UMC polity should the “New Conference Center Resolution” fail; the role of faith in the decision to build a new conference center

Motion to Call the Question

Bishop Schol recognized a motion from the floor to call the question. After noting that there had been five speeches in support of and five speeches against the “New Conference Center Resolution,” Bishop Schol called for a vote on the motion to call the question.

The motion passed.

Final Statement from the Board of Trustees

Rev. Lou Strugala, Chair of the Conference Board of Trustees, made a concluding statement supporting the “New Conference Center Resolution.” He indicated his faith in the process and people who produced the resolution. He apologized for mistakes made on the path to purchasing and building a new conference center. He stated his faith that God has great plans for the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference that include the new conference center. He asked the annual conference to support the resolution.

Approval of the Motion to Adopt the “New Conference Center Resolution.”

Bishop Schol called for a vote on the motion to adopt the “New Conference Center Resolution.”

11:19 a.m. The annual conference voted to adopt the “New Conference Center Resolution.”

Concluding Comments

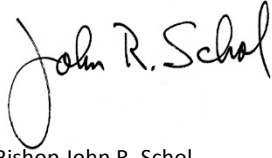
Bishop Schol offered some concluding comments indicating that his desire for the special session was to ensure that questions about the “New Conference Center Resolution” were answered. Bishop Schol expressed his faith in the Conference Board of Trustees. Bishop Schol shared his experience in overseeing large building projects and expressed that he had never witnessed a more thorough process. Bishop Schol expressed his thanks for and faith in the general contractor and architect for the new conference center.

Prayer and Dismissal

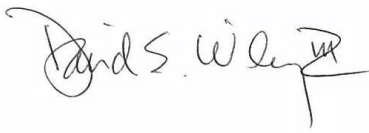
11:22 a.m. Bishop Schol dismissed the special session of the annual conference with prayer.

CERTIFICATION OF DAILY PROCEEDINGS

WE HEREBY CERTIFY THAT the foregoing is a correct and complete report of the proceedings of the special session of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church held at The Great Auditorium, Ocean Grove, NJ on September 27, 2014.



Bishop John R. Schol
Resident Bishop
The United Methodist Church
Greater New Jersey Annual Conference



Rev. Dr. David E. Wiley, III
Secretary
The United Methodist Church
Greater New Jersey Annual Conference