Minutes of the Board of the
Pacific Northwest District, Church of the Brethren
Meeting July 9, 2026

In attendance: Enten Eller, Patrick Fiegenbaum, Daniel Klayton, Peggy Liley, Liz Ullery Swenson, Howard Ullery, Lani Wright, Gretchen Zience

Peggy called us to order at 6:06 p.m. We began with a round of introductions for our newest Mission and Ministry Board member, Gretchen Zience

Minutes

The minutes of the June 18, 2026 were approved as distributed.

Financial Report

Daniel did not have updated reports through the end of June as we are waiting on Eder Financial's monthly report for June. Daniel and Debbie Franklin will meet with Loyce Borgmann on July 15 at 6:30 p.m. PDT to discuss the mechanics and procedure of transferring the District's Eder assets to Everence.

Daniel would like to add a donation button to the District website, like the one the Ellisforde congregation recently added to its website. It was the sense of the meeting to approve Daniel's proposal and we will get a look at the button and its functions next month.

Lani recalled the sale of the Columbia Lakewood Community Church building, and reiterated her dismay with the UCC response. She has since found out that the UCC Conference is dealing with their own problems right now, which explains some of the abruptness of their initial response.

Standing Committee Report

Patrick reported on the actions of Standing Committee, recounting the four items of new business that were passed on to the delegate body (Resolution on Weapons Transfer, Adjustments to 2014 Ministerial Leadership; Resolution: Walking Together: Immigration, Peacemaking, Conscience, and Supporting Our Neighbors; and Recommended Cost of Living Adjustment to the Minimum Cash Salary Table for Pastors). There was considerable discussion in Standing Committee about how best to support the Haitian Brethren congregations in Florida and elsewhere, whose members have lost their Temporary Protected Status and face the possibility of being forcibly returned to Haiti.

Council of District Executives

Howard reported that the District Executives likewise had a light slate of work this year. They were involved in a nominating party and discussing the adjustments to the 2014 ministerial leadership paper. CODE also worked on the New Table process, and Howard asked the Board to approve a grant of $1,000 for CODE to defray their expenses in hiring consultant Lon Swartzenthruber, and advancing the process. Howard was not sure of the exact amount paid, but thought it was $60,000 to $80,000. CODE has paid Lon out of funds that CODE had on hand. After discussion, it was the sense of the meeting to send CODE $1,800 against their outlay.

Liz expressed some concern about the work done so far on the New Table initiative as well as the expense. Gretchen agreed with Liz, and was interested as well in what New Table is, what its objective is, and so forth. Howard agreed with the concerns Liz and Gretchen expressed. He said CODE will meet further with Lon to further define and refine the New Table initiative. After the meeting, Howard sent an e-mail giving more detail on the Council's work with Lon and attaching a document The New Table Process, laying out 13 areas (One of those areas (number 4) is Inconsistent and Ineffective Communication.)

Considering Board Actions re Annual Conference Resolutions

The District routinely reviews the results of Annual Conference and discusses what actions the District and its congregations might take in response. Lani suggested that we make this a discussion item of business at District Conference.

The specific actions Annual Conference took that the Board thought we should consider are:

a. Walking Together: Immigration, Peacemaking, Conscience, and Supporting our Neighbors.

b. Resolution on Weapons Transfer

Daniel will distribute the resolutions adopted by Annual Conference for folks to read and be prepared to discuss at our next meeting.

On a side note, Enten reported that the number of non-delegate virtual attendees at Annual Conference tripled this year, using the system he set up. While that was good, Enten feels it could have been much better, and overcoming resistance from the Annual Conference Office is

the biggest hurdle. The District remains committed to support Enten for the 2027 Annual Conference.

Update on Whitestone Community Church of the Brethren Documents

Peggy said that Whitestone hosted a minister from Valley Christian Fellowship (VCF) who preached a sermon on a recent Sunday. Neither Peggy nor a couple of other congregants she talked to were favorably impressed by the sermon. Other members of the congregation received the VCF message quite eagerly.

The congregation had a meeting to discuss what matters to the congregants and how leadership from VCF might meet those priorities. If VCF isn't able or willing to meet those priorities, the congregation will need to discuss its next steps without VCF in the picture. Peggy said that VCF is anxious to start a satellite congregation in Whitestone, and may be angling to take over ownership of the church building. Howard said that the District follows denominational polity in regard to the ownership of church buildings. If a congregation decides to disaffiliate from the Church of the Brethren, the ownership of its building passes to the District.

We discussed various strategies for helping Whitestone clarify its thinking on their way forward. Peggy noted that Debbie Eisenbise has offered to consult with the congregation, but Whitestone is not yet ready to engage a consultant. The Board remains committed to support Whitestone, and is prepared to offer whatever assistance is needed.

District Conference Planning September 25-27, 2026 at Camp Koinonia

Most of the discussion surrounding planning was tabled until our August meeting. Howard mentioned that he has been contacted by Mennonite Insurance (may not be its actual name, Howard will clarify), which is looking to open an office in the Pacific Northwest. They have asked to attend our District Conference, and participate to the level of our comfort, whether that is a table with information, or a formal presentation, or something else. It was the sense of the Board to invite Mennonite Insurance to District Conference, and we will work out just what that means.

Closing We adjourned at 7:57 p.m. Next meeting August 13, 2026 at 6 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Fiegenbaum
Recording Secretary
Pacific Northwest District