

Meeting of the Board of Directors of WACC UK

March 30, 2021 - Online

MINUTES

1. Welcome by the President

The President, Embert Charles, called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. He thanked the Directors and the Officers for their commitment to WACC, and thanked staff for the work that they are doing.

2. Roll Call

The President called the roll. Those present at the meeting were:

Embert Charles (President)
Stephen Brown (Treasurer)
Mathilde Kpalla (Vice-President)
Vincent Rajkumar
Ary Régis
Alba Sabaté Gauxachs
David Morales Alba
Rania Rashad William
Jim McDonnell

Absent with apologies

Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls (Vice-President) with excuse
Gregg Brekke with excuse

Staff:

Philip Lee (WACC General Secretary and Director)
Sara Speicher (Deputy General Secretary)
Joseph Patterson (Financial Controller)
Shari McMaster (Administrative Coordinator / Board Liaison)

3. Agenda

The President requested a Motion regarding the Agenda. It was MOVED by JIM McDONNELL and SECONDED by ALBA SABATÉ GAUXACHS to adopt the Agenda as presented. ALL IN FAVOUR

4. Minutes

March 12, 2020 Minutes

The General Secretary presented the March 12, 2020 Minutes. A major component of those Minutes were recommendations to the Board by the Treasurer regarding the financial situation of the organization. The recommendations were all approved.

The President asked if there were any errors or omissions in the March 12, 2020 Minutes. There being none, he called for a motion to approve the Minutes.

It was MOVED by STEPHEN BROWN and SECONDED by VINCENT RAJKUMAR that the Minutes be received and adopted. ALL IN FAVOUR

May 19, 2020 Minutes

The General Secretary presented the May 19, 2020 Minutes. The Minutes outlined the steps that the Secretariat had taken to review and produce a budget as requested by the Board at the March 12, 2020 Board Meeting.

The President asked if there were any errors or omissions in the May 19, 2020 Minutes. There being none, he called for a motion to approve the Minutes.

It was MOVED by JIM McDONNELL and SECONDED by MATHILDE KPALLA that the Minutes be received and adopted. ALL IN FAVOUR

5. Treasurer's Overview

The Treasurer said that the Financial Controller would be asked to present two financial documents - the Budget, which is the WACC Global Actual 2020 vs 2019 and 2021-2023 Budget, and the WACC UK Consolidated Financial Statements 2019. However, he first wished to explain why the 2019 Consolidated Statements were being presented at this meeting in 2021.

In 2020 there were two separate issues that interacted with each other, causing the delay in the preparation of the 2019 Financial Statements. They were firstly the restructuring of WACC Canada, making WACC UK the sole member of WACC Canada, which meant that it became necessary for the 2019 WACC UK statements to include the WACC Canada 2019 statements. It was a complicated process.

Secondly, the auditing process was delayed both in the UK and Canada due to the onset of Covid-19, which impacted negatively the completion timeline of the audits.

As a result, the 2019 Consolidated Financial Statements were only made available last week. WACC UK was facing demands to file the 2019 Financial Statements by Companies House to avoid legal action against the organization due to late filing. Therefore, the Finance Committee met on March 25 to approve the Audited Financial Statements on the understanding that the Board would be asked to retrospectively approve their action. The Treasurer underlined that this past year has not been an easy one for staff, but they have been diligent in cooperating with the auditors through this process.

6. Financial Statements

WACC Global Actuals 2020 vs 2019 and 2021-2023 Budgets

The Treasurer asked the Financial Controller to present the Budget document.

The document was shown onscreen and presented by the Financial Controller page by page. The Board was invited to ask questions at the end of each section.

It was asked if there was a possibility of receiving any sort of pandemic aid from the government(s). The Financial Controller indicated that he had explored this, but as WACC's income was not disrupted by Covid-19, WACC was not eligible for any aid.

The Treasure suggested that the budgets for 2021 to 2023 be approved on the understanding that the 2020 Financial Statements would be reviewed as soon as they are available.

It was MOVED by STEPHEN BROWN and SECONDED by JIM McDONNELL that the WACC GLOBAL Budgets 2021-2023 be approved as presented. ALL IN FAVOUR.

WACC UK Consolidated Financials 2019

Regarding the presentation of the WACC UK Consolidated Financials for 2019, the Treasurer noted that while the Budget document was in Canadian Dollars, the Financial Statements are in British Pounds. The Finance Committee, when it reviewed the Consolidated Financials, found it a complicated process as this is the first year that WACC UK has to take into account the audited Financial Statements of WACC CA.

Throughout the document two phrases recur. One is the “Charity” which is WACC UK and the other is the “Group” which is the consolidated entity of WACC UK and WACC Canada. There is no separate column for WACC Canada. The Treasurer asked that the Financial Controller take the Board through the Financial Statement section by section. The Board was invited to ask questions at the end of each section.

The Financial Statements have been signed by the Treasurer and the General Secretary as they were approved by the Finance Committee on behalf of the Board.

The **Report of the Independent Auditors** section is the most important part of the Statements. It provides the opinion of the auditor that the Statements are a true representation of the affairs of the organization as of December 31, 2019 and that the organization has met the requirements of UK accounting practices and those of Companies House.

There being no questions relating to the Consolidated Financial Statements, the President thanked the Financial Controller for his very clear explanation of the Statements.

It was MOVED by STEPHEN BROWN and SECONDED by VINCENT RAJKUMAR that the Board approve the WACC UK Audited Consolidated Financials 2019 as reviewed and approved on its behalf by the Finance Committee on 25 March, 2021. ALL IN FAVOUR.

The President asked the General Secretary to speak to the remaining Agenda items.

7. Fundraising

Fundraising Actions

The General Secretary said that the document Funding Actions 2019-21 is a graphic account of what staff is doing to attempt to improve the funding situation of WACC. The document shows the actions taken and includes comments and the required follow-up. All staff is expected to help with fundraising on some level. Staff has worked diligently on this effort.

It is a matter of staff identifying and seizing opportunities, whether it be in conversation with people, research, identifying new players in the field, following up on grant opportunities and/or changing priorities, to see where WACC might fit in with those.

The General Secretary noted that in addition to the Funding Actions document, Sara Speicher and Sara Macharia have done much work to fundraise for GMMP. He also noted that a Fundraising Task Force meeting is overdue and that a meeting will be convened in the near future.

The Treasurer thanked the Secretariat for continuing to seek funding opportunities and the document provides a clear picture on the challenges at this time in the current funding environment. He reminded the Board to consider WACC if a possible funding opportunity presents itself.

The General Secretary noted that the application to Bread for the World for a further core grant is almost complete and is to be submitted by the end of June.

The General Secretary committed to filling some of the gaps in the document and circulate the amended version to members of the Board

It was MOVED by ALBA SABATÉ GAUXACHS and SECONDED by MATHILDE KPALLA that the Funding Actions document be received. ALL IN FAVOUR.

Membership

The Deputy General Secretary was invited to present the Membership Report. Membership has been discussed at a number of Board meetings. This report is a reminder that the objective of increasing membership is not just about numbers. It is about engagement, participation at the Regional levels, commitment to the issue of communication rights for advocacy and impact, and it is a concrete way that the relevance of WACC can be demonstrated to funders and partners. The numbers have seen a slight decrease from last year. The membership number is 204.

The membership campaign that was initiated for about 3 weeks, from February to International Women's Day in March, was implemented under the recommendations previously discussed by the Board. There has been discussion about the Regional executives engaging in membership campaigns over the next two years. This initial campaign was part of an intensive exercise to provide resources for visibility that can be picked up and used throughout the two years. There were Facebook and social media posts, including short testimonial videos. The Deputy General Secretary thanked Mathilde, Rania and Ary for their support. Ary's Facebook post had many reactions.

Some of the social media statistics have been analysed. There has not been a significant increase in membership as a result of the campaign, but the Secretariat would be interested to see if the Regions have seen more engagement from members or past members as a result of the campaign and what experiences the Regions may have.

The President asked for any comments or questions.

Vincent Rajkumar indicated that WACC Asia has used this campaign to reach out to all those who were past members of the Region, who at one point had been very active members. There has been some response. They are also using this as an opportunity to contact possible new members at universities, for example.

The President encouraged the Directors to continue to participate in this endeavour.

It was MOVED by STEPHEN BROWN and SECONDED by JIM McDONNELL that the Membership Report be received. ALL IN FAVOUR.

8. Strategic Plan 2022-26

The General Secretary provided an update to the Directors of where WACC is in the process previously approved by the Directors. He referred to three documents on the Directors' website.

Trends - an evaluation of where the world is at in terms of communications and media.

Achievements - an attempt to look at what has been done under the existing Strategic Plan. An immense amount has been accomplished. There are some recognized failures which are also noted in the document but overall WACC can be proud of the results.

Enabling People attempts to explain to people who do not know what WACC is about, who may not understand what the field of communication rights is, what WACC does in a language that is straightforward.

On the basis of those documents, there has been a move towards consultation with Regional Executive Committees for their input. Latin America, the Middle East, North America and the Caribbean have responded so far. Once the other Regions engage, it is hoped that a webinar can be arranged to discuss face to face how to move forward and to incorporate further ideas into a draft strategic plan that will be brought back to the Board for approval by the end of the year.

Jim McDonnell commented that he is struck by the lack of understanding about the link between communication rights and broader social development issues. He thinks this is something to focus on in terms of trying to find a way to put that link centre stage, so that people are easily able to see it.

The General Secretary said that the publication "Expanding Shrinking Communication Spaces", available in English, Spanish, Arabic and soon to be in French, has gained some traction in this regard.

It was MOVED by MATHILDE KPALLA and SECONDED by STEPHEN BROWN that the Strategic Plan documents be received. ALL IN FAVOUR.

9. Digital Transformations Symposium (September 13-15, 2021)

The General Secretary reported that WACC is heavily involved in the WACC / WCC Digital Transformations Symposium to be held online from September 13-15, 2021. There are several groups in which WACC is taking part - core group, programme group, statement group. The Concept Note and the Programme are available on the Board website. This is a key event for WACC and the ecumenical movement. It focuses on digital rights and inclusion around the world and it is hoped that large numbers of people from our networks will participate. WACC project partners will be encouraged to provide information on case studies. The rollout will happen over the next few months.

The President thanked the General Secretary for this update.

10. Review and Approval of Policies

As the meeting time was short, the President asked that the General Secretary submit notes to assist with the review of Policies as the matter was deferred until the next Board meeting. Comments should be forwarded to the General Secretary within the next two weeks. The Policy documents will be reviewed at the next Board meeting.

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Adjournment

The President thanked everyone for attending and asked for a motion to adjourn.

It was MOVED by VINCENT RAJKUMAR and SECONDED by MATHILDE KPALLA to adjourn the Meeting.
ALL IN FAVOUR.

The meeting concluded at 2:04 p.m. Toronto time.

DRAFT