

**General Synod Council
Reformed Church in America
Minutes of October 23-24, 2020 Meeting
Zoom Videoconference**

Welcome and Prayer

Ned Beadel, moderator, called the October 23-24, 2020 General Synod Council (GSC) meeting to order on Friday, October 23, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. (eastern) followed by devotions and prayer. Having established a quorum, members, staff, and guests were welcomed and introduced themselves.

Members Present

The following members of the GSC were present for all or part of the meeting:

Pedro Agudelo	Kent McHeard
Eddy Alemán, <i>ex-officio</i>	Eric Moreno
Philip Assink	Sheila Moses
Ned Beadel	James Nakakihara
Michelle Chahine	Albert Plat
Charles Contreras	Margaret Ritchie
Devonna Cousins	George Rounds
Bruce Deckinga	Betty Shuster
EJ de Waard	Clarence Smith (ELCA)
Stephanie Doeschot	Kimberly Van Es
Jamie Dykstra	Leigh Van Kempen
Hellen Harvey	Harris Van Oort
Anna Jackson	Patricia Varga
Robert Johnson	Imos Wu
David Landegent	

Staff and Guests

The following staff members and guests were present for all or part of the meeting:

Terri Boven, *Recorder*
Elizabeth Brand, *Director of General Synod Operations*
Thomas Smith, *Regional Synod Observer from Council of Synod Executives*
Jillisa Teitsma, *Chief Financial Officer*
Jill Ver Steeg, *Chief Operations Officer*
Angela Worthley, *Recorder*

Consent Agenda

The *ad interim* appointments were removed from the consent agenda. The GSC was notified of the addition of a Pastoral Formation Oversight Board *ad interim* appointment to the list found in the agenda package.

GSC 20-36 Motion made, supported, and carried:

To adopt the following from the consent section of the agenda:

- Appointment of Robert Johnson and Eric Moreno as governance monitors for the current meeting
- Schedule and agenda
- Approval of June 9, 2020 GSC minutes

GSC 20-37 Motion made, supported, and carried:

To appoint *ad interim* Rev. Rolfi Elivo Lopez (Council for Hispanic Ministries designee) to the Commission on Race and Ethnicity.

To appoint *ad interim* Therese McCarty to the New Brunswick Theological Seminary Board of Trustees.

To appoint *ad interim* Rev. David Izenbart (RSMAM) to the Western Theological Seminary Board of Trustees.

To appoint *ad interim* Beth Snyder to the Western Theological Seminary Board of Trustees.

To appoint *ad interim* Lorena Serrano to the Pastoral Formation Oversight Board.

GSC 20-38 Motion made, supported, and carried:

To appoint *ad interim* Mike Pitsenberger, Eddy Alemán, and Eugene Sutton to the Hope College Board of Trustees, Class of 2023, given that the postponement of General Synod 2020 meant that the General Synod was unable to approve these appointments, and further;

To seek ratification of this action by the next regular session of General Synod.

Executive Limitations

Eddy Alemán presented monitoring reports and reported compliance for the following:

- EL-1 Global Executive Constraint

- EL-2 Treatment of Staff
- EL-5 Financial Recording and Reporting
- EL-8 Compensation and Benefits
- EL-12 Ecumenical Responsibilities

Permanent Committees (GP 10.1 and GP 10.2)

Jillisa Teitsma and Robert Johnson gave reports from the Investment Advisory Committee and the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

GSC 20-39 Motion made, supported, and carried:

To approve the Investment Advisory Committee's recommendation of a 5% endowment spending rate for fiscal year 2021.

GSC 20-40 Motion made, supported, and carried:

To approve the Investment Advisory Committee's recommendation to revise the GSC Tier 2 Statement of Investment Policy. See Schedule GSC 20-40 for the text of the policy (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken).

Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA)

The general secretary presented an update on the proposed elimination of the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency ("MFCA") and a path forward for RCA-MFCA students.

Leadership Reports

Oral reports were given by:

- Ned Beadel, GSC moderator
- EJ de Waard, General Synod president
- Philip Assink, General Synod vice president

Classis Meeting Visits

GSC members reported orally on visits made to classis meetings.

Executive Session

The GSC met in executive session for the remainder of the Friday session following 1:06 pm (eastern).

SATURDAY SESSION

Call to Order

The moderator called the Saturday, October 24, 2020 session of the October 23-24, 2020 GSC meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. (eastern) followed by devotions and prayer.

Vision 2020 Implementation Strategy

At its June 9, 2020 meeting, the GSC approved GSC 20-31 which reads as follows:

To instruct the general secretary to work on an implementation strategy of the Vision 2020 Team's recommendation(s) to General Synod, to be presented to GSC at its fall 2020 meeting. This strategy should include a clear vision for the future ministry of the Reformed Church in America based on the Vision 2020 Team's recommendations to General Synod.

The general secretary presented an update on the implementation strategy and led the GSC through a series of small group discussions held in Zoom breakout rooms followed by verbal summaries before the entire GSC.

Adjournment

GSC 20-41

Motion made, supported, and carried to adjourn the meeting following closing prayer.

Philip Assink led the GSC in closing prayer.

The moderator adjourned the October 23-24, 2020 meeting of the GSC at 2:03 p.m. (eastern)

Terri Boven, Recorder
Angela Worthley, Recorder

Schedule GSC 20-40

Statement of Investment Policy

GSC Fixed Income Fund – Tier 2

Last Review Date: October 201920

I. INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES

The portfolio represents investments from the excess operating reserves of the General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America (GSC). The investment objectives are to preserve capital, maximize current return on investments consistent with safety of principal and maintain a high degree of liquidity in accordance with anticipated needs. The role of equity investments will be to maximize the long-term real growth of Portfolio assets, while the role of fixed-income investments will be to generate current income, provide for more stable periodic returns, and provide some protection against a prolonged decline in the market value of the Portfolio equity investments.

II. ASSET ALLOCATION

Asset allocation ranges are: fixed income 80–100%, equity 0-20%.

III. INVESTMENT GUIDELINES

Maturity Restriction – Fixed Income

The average duration of the fixed income portfolio shall not exceed a maximum of 125% of the average duration of the Barclays Intermediate Government Corporate bond index. No instrument will have a maturity in excess of 10 years. Instruments representing securitized assets are subject to the above maturity limits with the exception that weighted average life may be used as a proxy for final maturity. Normal settlement periods are not to be included for calculating maturity constraints (ex. new issues.)

Social Screening Constraints

The investment alternatives chosen in the Portfolio must seek to avoid investments in the securities of companies whose principal business involves the production or distribution of tobacco or alcohol or the business of gambling, or the business of for-profit prisons. The socially responsible investment guidelines are not intended to be a “zero tolerance” policy and the determination, implementation, and ongoing monitoring of these guidelines shall be the sole responsibility of the Investment Manager hired to oversee these investment options.

Fixed Income Investments

The portfolio will seek diversification of risk by holding the securities of a variety of issuers.

With the exception of U.S. Government and Agency securities, no single issuer will represent more than 5% of the overall value of the portfolio at the time of purchase.

Individual issues shall be limited to a minimum rating of BBB- by either Standard & Poor's or Baa3 by Moody's at the time of purchase. Downgrades in credit quality shall be reported to the RCA Treasurer and sold at the discretion of the manager. The average quality of the portfolio shall be maintained at investment grade or higher on a weighted-average basis.

The ~~GSC General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America~~ may invest up to 5% of its investable assets in The Reformed Church in America Church Growth Fund (CGF) Savings Certificates.

Eligible Investments – Fixed Income

The portfolio may invest in U.S. Government obligations or deposits issued or guaranteed as to interest and principal by the government of the United States or any agency or instrumentality thereof. Corporate obligations, asset-backed securities and mortgage-backed securities are allowable investments.

The following limits will guide investment decisions in non-government, non-corporate bond investments:

- Asset Backed Securities – 10%
- Commercial Mortgage Backed Securities – 10%
- Collateralized Mortgage Obligations– 10%
- Mortgage Backed Securities – 10%
- CGF Savings Certificates – 5%

Eligible Investments – Equities

Investments shall be limited to publically traded, marketable securities or pooled products (including, but not limited to, exchange-traded funds or mutual funds) in the following categories:

- Equities – U.S. (common and convertible preferred)
- Equities – non-U.S. (American depository and exchange-traded funds)

Prohibited Investments

In no event shall any funds be invested in instruments known as “structured notes” or instruments commonly considered “derivative” instruments (*e.g.*, inverse floaters, leveraged floaters, equity-linked securities, options, futures, swaps, caps, floors, and collars).