

**Minutes**  
**LCMS North Dakota District Board of Directors**  
**November 7, 2018 – Special Meeting**

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A special video conference meeting of The North Dakota Board of Directors was called to order by Vice Chairman John Riley at 8:30 pm to discuss the future of the mission start in Watford City.

**Background.** At the October 26, 2018 meeting in Bismarck the board determined a course of action in regard to Pastor Heide and Watford City. Part of that action was for President Bertsch to visit with Pastor Heide and his congregations to determine whether or not they have an actual plan for furthering the mission start.

The Executive Committee then met via video conference on Monday, November 5, 2018; to discuss the proposed budget as it pertains to the Watford Mission plant. At the October 26, 2018; meeting the board passed a motion for the 2019-2020 budget to contain \$40,000 (a decrease of \$5,716) for Watford. This meeting of the Executive Committee was intended to see if any different or further action was needed. After much discussion it was decided to suggest to the board that the North Dakota District end funding for the Watford City Mission Start at the end of the current fiscal year (January 31, 2019). A summary of the pertinent information which facilitated the Executive Committee discussion is included as “Exhibit A” in the appendix to these minutes. The Executive Committee decided to call a special video conference meeting for Wednesday, November 7, 2018 at 8:30pm.

After discussion regarding the new information made available to the board, It was moved, seconded and passed that the North Dakota District end all funding to the Watford Mission Start as of January 31, 2019 (the end of the current fiscal year).

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m. by Vice Chairman Riley.

Sub Cruce,

Rev. Joshua D. Reimche, District Secretary

## Exhibit A

Following the board meeting on October 26, 2018; one of the board members contacted an acquaintance in Watford City about the mission start possibly meeting in their building. What follows are some of that board member's discussion with the Watford City Pastor and some of the member's own investigations.

While on the phone, the board member asked The Watford City Pastor a little about Watford to get a fuller picture. Here is what The Watford City Pastor said:

- 3 years ago, young families began to move into the town.
- 2 years ago, apartments, houses, and schools exploded with growth. The population is estimated at 10,000 people now.
- Unlike 5-7 years ago, there are now families in Watford. The husbands still have crazy schedules, but the wives and children have consistent normal 8-5 schedules with weekends off.
- Every church in Watford is currently growing. This is what he hears, as he is the leader of the ecumenical group.
- Churches in Watford are getting phone calls each week about new people seeking a church. It is typically for his church to get visitors each week.
- The largest church in Watford is the Mormon Church. The Mormon church is a new church plant in Watford. They just finished a 4-million-dollar construction project.
- He said that there is definitely a place at the table for the LCMS. However, he said that church planting is tough work.
- In his humble opinion, for a church to grow and get established, two things are necessary. 1) A plan. 2) Hard work in being visible in the community. With a reasonable plan (i.e., meeting location, times, goals, etc.) and being visible in the community, he said that there is plenty of opportunity for churches. There currently is more demand than supply in Watford right now.
- He asked a bit about the church plant and the board member shared with him that we have 4 people in membership. He was astonished. He said that there is no reason to have just 4 members. People are coming to Watford from across the United States and there should be easily more than 4 people in 2-3 years.

After the board member heard back from The Watford City Pastor that he wasn't aware of the mission in Watford, the board member took it upon himself to do a little research. He notes that he certainly is not trying to get Pastor Heide into trouble, but rather, wanted to see what kind of presence the church has in Watford.

First, the board member checked out the Facebook Page for the Watford Church plant. Unfortunately, it has not been updated in 6-months. In his humble opinion, a church plant should have daily updates on social media (weekly at a minimum). Social media is essential to a new plant. Furthermore, those updates should be 'boosted' into the Watford City area so that new people can know about the church plant. Not only is this easy, but it is very effective and affordable, and essential. Here is something else interesting - the Facebook page for Grassy Butte does seem to get periodic updates. It was updated just 5 hours ago and then last week. To

be honest, that concerns me. The Church plant should be updated more than Grassy Butte. (Note: stats show us that the majority of new people look online for a church before visiting). Secondly, the board member decided to 'cold-call' the hotel where the mission is meeting. So, he called Roosevelt Hotel and simply asked if they knew of a Lutheran Church at their hotel and if I could get information when they were meeting and who to contact. Long story short, the employee at the front desk was unaware of any Lutheran Church meeting at their hotel. That did not concern him, because she may be a part-time employee. However, in talking to the hotel manager, she was unaware of a Lutheran Church meeting at her hotel. The board member pressed her a bit and she did say that there were a group of Catholics meeting sporadically at the hotel. It wasn't until he gave them the name of Pastor Heide that they could confirm that he was meeting at the hotel. However, even after finding his name in the computer, they were not sure if he was a part of the Catholic Church or if they had mistaken the Lutheran Church for the Catholic Church. Nonetheless, they knew nothing about our mission meeting at their church, except for finding Pastor Heide's name in their computer.