

The Bridge Annual General Meeting Minutes

Date: Sunday, November 26, 2023

12:30pm–2:15pm (in person at *the bridge*)

Welcome/Call to Order: Pastor Brian Childs, the Lead Pastor, began the Annual General Meeting at 12:30pm with a warm welcome to all attendees. He outlined the agenda, which included updates on board members, finances, property development, and ministries, and reminded everyone to check in and register. He emphasized the importance of being a member of the church family, referencing Romans 12:4–5 to illustrate how each member contributes to the body of Christ. He highlighted the church's growth over the past 15 years and the need to appreciate those who contribute behind the scenes, such as in administration, underscoring the church's evolution and maturity.

Pastor Brian shared that the church operates through collaborative teams, without relying on superheroes, but rather appreciating each member's contributions. He mentioned the Board team, which consists of seven members, is responsible for governance and holds him accountable, the Nomination Committee works to identify the right board members needed at different seasons. He also noted that this church was pastor-led, working closely with staff to guide ministries, and emphasized the importance of life groups and ministry teams. Pastor Brian concluded by opening the meeting in prayer and invited Jim Lane to share a blessing over the gathering.

Recording Secretary: Pastor Brian communicated that Sonia Tan, as the Board Secretary, had been appointed as recording secretary for the meeting. Pastor Anna made the motion of acceptance, seconded by Cyril, all in favour.

Establishing Membership & Quorum: Pastor Brian reported that there were 288 members on the official membership list. Theresa made the motion to accept the presented membership roster, seconded by Peter Furnell, all in favour. Brian shared that 116 members were required to establish quorum. Cynthia announced that they had established a quorum with 124 members in attendance.

AGM Instructions: Pastor Brian explained that every member must check in so they can vote digitally. If anyone did not have a device, they are to let Rachel know to receive a ballot. Since some people were voting by ballot, one scrutineer was

required. Ken Mo volunteered. Jey made the motion of acceptance related to Ken being the scrutineer, seconded by Sam. Brian shared that voting for the agenda items will take place towards the end of the meeting.

Acceptance of Past Minutes: Pastor Brian asked for a motion of acceptance related to last year's AGM meeting minutes, which had been uploaded to *the AGM* website and made available to the members, as per the by-laws. John Schurman made the motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Jim Lane, all in favour. Brian thanked Sonia for preparing last year's meeting minutes.

Election of Board Members: Jey Anandarajan, Chair of the Board Nomination Committee, introduced members of the Nomination Committee, Doreen Chan, Pamela Chung, Ken Mo, and Bill Buck, and expressed his appreciation for them.

Jey shared that there were three board members who completed their terms and that there are three positions to be filled. Chase Bethel had completed two terms and was not eligible for re-election; Sonia Tan had completed her first term of three years and was eligible for re-election; and Ken Mo was stepping down one year before completing his term since his wife, Kathy, had joined *the bridge* staff. Jey thanked them for serving on the board.

Jey explained that the Nomination Committee had received 15 nominations in September; 10 of which met the basic qualifications. The Committee then reviewed the criteria, leadership attributes, the current context and season of the church, etc. Through prayerful consideration, they then approached the three nominees who allowed their names to stand: Sonia Tan, Teena Chander, and Tim Jenkins. Jey explained that the membership would have the opportunity to vote and affirm these three candidates at the voting stage of the meeting.

Brian expressed his appreciation for Jey and the team for their stewardship over the process.

Financial Update: Chase Bethel, Chair of the Finance Committee, introduced himself and Cynthia Yoon, who is the Director of Administration and a member of the Finance Committee. He shared that the update would cover the operational finances and a brief update on the building finances.

Cynthia reported that the church's operations resulted in a \$6K surplus, exceeding forecasts. Ministry expenses were lower than expected due to the timing of the building's completion, while income remained flat. Looking ahead, they were optimistic, projecting a 10% growth in giving, trusting that God will provide. This

increase is part of a faith journey, aiming to return to pre-pandemic ministry levels. The increase in facilities expenses was attributed to the larger building, the initiation of two services and more in-person ministries.

Chase outlined the financial projections for the upcoming year, anticipating an income of \$1.962M. This includes \$1.844M from giving, reflecting a 10% increase, despite not meeting the previous year's 6% growth target. This increase is part of a faith journey, trusting in God to meet the needs associated with the larger building and additional services. An additional \$118K is expected from ministries and other sources. Operational expenses are forecasted to be \$2.050M, nearly a 20% increase from last year. This included significant increases in ministries (\$315K, 70% increase), missions (\$137K, 70% increase), and salaries (\$1.148M, 19% increase), with the Compensation Committee, led by Chrissie Shum, ensuring fair compensation for staff based on benchmarks like the Consumer Price Index.

Despite a projected operational deficit of \$90K and a cash outflow of \$252K for capital and loan repayment, they remain confident in its stewardship. Chase mentioned the implementation of an interim review after the Christmas season to monitor giving and ensure financial stability. This additional check and balance will help track progress and make necessary adjustments to maintain the church's financial health. The church has a history of responsible financial management, as evidenced by ending the previous year with a surplus, despite projecting a deficit.

Chase and Cynthia also gave an update on the building project finances, reminding everyone that at the start of the building project, a budget of just under \$14 million was set, including a 10% contingency to cover unexpected costs. At this current point in time, \$13,353,000 has been spent, making necessary adjustments for trade renegotiations, quality improvements, and regulatory requirements—all within our contingency. They were pleased to report that the final expected payment was \$438,000, and our available resources exceeded this amount, ensuring we remained within our projected budget. This careful financial management reflected the team's commitment to delivering value and staying on track.

A significant highlight was the incredible success of the Building Hope campaign, led by Neil Maskery, which raised over \$1 million. This, combined with \$11 million from the original land sale, over \$1 million in HST recoverable, \$500,000 from GIC investments interest, and \$140,000 from operational surplus, brought us close to our expected outflows.

Additionally, the Vision Fund, set aside for future projects, stood strong at \$1.4 million in short-term GICs. They also managed a temporary internal loan to meet cash flow needs, which was to be repaid once city requirements were met.

Chase acknowledged and appreciated the other members of the Finance team, including Tim Jenkins, Ken Mo, Michelle Lai, and Chrissie Shum. He also mentioned Janet Hum and Giselle Albi who have been faithful in taking good care of the books.

The members were reminded they would need to vote on two specific motions related to finances: 1) To approve the 2022-2023 audited financial statements and to receive the 2023-2024 operating budget, and 2) To appoint Norton McMullen LLP as the auditor for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

Pastor Brian expressed deep gratitude to Chase and Cynthia for their leadership and contributions, particularly highlighting Chase's role in the finance team and his upcoming board term conclusion. He praised the team's efforts in navigating financial challenges during the pandemic, attributing their success to divine intervention and diligent stewardship. Kevin Aide's leadership in managing increased project costs was also commended.

Pastor Brian addressed future plans for the Vision Fund, emphasizing its mission-oriented purpose and potential for sponsoring new church developments. He assured that a definitive plan would be formulated soon, with a vision team to be established within the next year to explore opportunities for expanding their ministry. Calvin Quek inquired about the Vision Fund's timeline, to which Pastor Brian responded with an overview of possible future initiatives. Kip Ng inquired about the term "maximization," prompting Pastor Brian to elaborate on their study and plans to optimize the building's use for ministry and community engagement.

Kip asked about the Finance Committee's projected 10% increase, expressing concerns about the pace of growth. Chase humorously noted the annual budget discussions with Pastor Brian, emphasizing the need for responsible and gradual growth, considering volunteer and staff well-being. Pastor Brian reflected on the challenges faced during the building project and pandemic, highlighting the church's recovery and current attendance. He acknowledged the tension between his ambitious vision and Chase's cautious stewardship, affirming their commitment to achieving growth and community impact in a healthy and responsible manner.

Voting: Cynthia explained that voting members in attendance should have received their electronic ballot via email. She walked everyone through the voting process and reminded everyone that the membership would be required to vote on the following four motions on one ballot:

- To accept the Members Meeting minutes from November 2022
- To affirm the three new board members
- To approve the 2022-2023 audited financial statements and receive the new budget for 2023-2024
- To appoint Norton McMullen as our auditor for the upcoming fiscal year

Everyone was given the opportunity to submit their votes online and through ballots.

Property Development: Kevin Aide, Chair of the Building Project Committee, began his presentation by emphasizing the guiding principles that have steered the property development project from its inception. He highlighted the importance of creating a welcoming and intentional design, ensuring safety and security, and maximizing the use of the space beyond the traditional 90-minute weekly service. The design aimed to make the church a hub for various activities, including children's programs and community events, thereby fostering a sense of community and engagement. These principles were honoured throughout the project, from the initial decision to sell a portion of the land to the final finishing touches.

Kevin shared the journey of the project, which began in earnest in late 2016 and culminated in 2023. Despite challenges, including a pandemic and construction delays, the project progressed with God's favour and community support. The church building, previously 40,000 square feet with multiple levels, was transformed into a 60,000 square foot, fully accessible facility. This expansion included new construction and the retention of key areas like the auditorium and gymnasium. The new building now boasted increased parking capacity and versatile spaces designed for various uses, enhancing the church's ability to serve its congregation and the broader community. Despite a list of minor deficiencies, Kevin declared the building project done.

Reflecting on the project's blessings, Kevin recounted several instances where the church experienced favourable outcomes, such as obtaining necessary variances and permits. The support from the City of Markham, including a favourable parking variance and a reciprocal overflow parking agreement with a nearby school, was crucial. Additionally, the region's discretion in development charges and the

cooperation from the fire department and building officials facilitated the project's smooth progression. These instances of support and accommodation underscored the community's recognition of the church's positive impact and mission.

Kevin expressed gratitude to everyone involved in the project, from those who contributed financially, to those who prayed and volunteered their expertise. He emphasized that the new building represented a milestone moment for the church, second only to its founding. The facility's potential to serve the community is immense, and realizing this potential would require continued commitment from the congregation.

During the Q&A, Teresa Maskery, a long-time church member, expressed her appreciation for the expansion of the children and youth areas. She noted that the new spaces are being fully utilized and loved by the students, highlighting the outdoor patio area as a particularly valuable addition. Pastor Brian and Kevin also addressed a question from Frank Tan about the seating capacity of the auditorium. Kevin clarified that while the permitted capacity is 726, the current seating arrangement prioritized comfort over maximum occupancy, resulting in a more comfortable but slightly lower actual capacity.

Voting Results: Pastor Brian announced the voting results came in and shared that everything passed:

- Members Meeting Minutes from November 2022 was approved at 98%
- Three Board members affirmed and received a majority vote of over 90%:
Tim Jenkins, Sonia Tan, and Teena Chander
- Financial statements approved and new budget received 98%
- Norton McMullen approved as our auditor for the next fiscal year with a vote of 98%

Close & Adjournment: Pastor Brian closed the meeting and asked for a motion of adjournment. John Schurman made the motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 2:13pm.