



THE UNITED CHURCH DOWNTOWN MISSION OF WINDSOR INC.
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www.downtownmission.com
Registered Canadian Charitable Organization No. 11926 0420 RR001



The Downtown Mission serves as sanctuary to all in answer to the call of the Gospel. Through outreach, we offer food and shelter for the body, nurture for the spirit, advocacy, and opportunities for human growth embracing those seeking care and support.

42nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of The UNITED CHURCH DOWNTOWN
MISSION OF WINDSOR INC. Wednesday, May 28, 2025
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Minutes of Meeting

Date: Wednesday, May 28, 2025

Time: 5:36 p.m. – 6:24 p.m.

Location: Moose Lodge, 777 Tecumseh Road West, Windsor, ON N8X 1H4

IN ATTENDANCE:

Current Board Members: Abram Banman, Chris Knowles, Dolph Barsanti, Don Atwell, Joe De Luca, Tanya Kelly,

In Coming Board Members: Ashwini Kancheti, Carrie Davis, John Emans, Stuart Bruce, Stuart Forsyth

Board Regrets: Brian Porter, Rev. Dr. Cathy Collins-Barker, Kristie McInnis, Marvio Vinhaes

Staff: Ali Mian, Ally Dietrich, Ashley Marchand, Dinesh Singh, Edith Newell-Beattie, Emmanuel Lee, Harsh Raj, Jordyne Rose, Krista Girardin, Laurie Musson, Malcolm Bhanks, Matthew Johnson, Maurizio Tiberia, Moe Fallah, Rukshini Ponniah-Goulin, Sara Salamati, Sharda Yadav

DTM Chaplaincy Team: George Bozanich, Rev. James Hatt, Brian Stocks

Community Members: Arleen Hatt, Carolyn Soulliere, Cheryl Hawes, Chijioke Bobo Denis, Chris Macleod, Daniella Haliimah Namatta, Deanna & Walter Ponniah, Dejan Boskovic, DJ Vandongen, Dr Jennifer Bondy, Eric Brisco, Fatima Khadem, Fred Barkhouse, Jake Kelza, Janeen Auld, Jenie Davidson, Jennifer Tanner, John Wallace, Smithies, Josette Labute, Kelly Goz, Laura Tan, Leah Gathigia Smithies, Leah Key, Liz Rockwood, Margo Cameron, Michele & Bill McGregor, Neil Pettit, Peter Gillen, Rakesh Naidu, Rebecca Pacheco, Robert Cameron, Roger Brothers, Rosemary Li, Sam Sinjari, Serge & Pauline Dignard, Sherry Kelly, Sonya Watson, Stephanie Pacheco, Teresa Jokic, Todd Turner, Whitney Kitchen

WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER: Abram Banman

5:36 p.m.

- Abram Banman, Interim Chair of the Board of Directors, welcomed attendees to the 42nd Annual General Meeting of The United Church Downtown Mission of Windsor, Inc.

- The Downtown Mission is an Incorporated Ministry of The United Church of Canada, supervised by the Antler River Watershed Regional Council under the governance of the General Council.
- The Interim Chair read the Downtown Mission's Mission Statement: *The Downtown Mission serves as sanctuary to all in answer to the call of the Gospel. Through outreach, we offer food and shelter for the body, nurture for the spirit, advocacy, and opportunities for human growth, embracing those seeking care and support.*
- The Chair expressed gratitude to all community partners, donors, volunteers, employees, and interested community members for their crucial support, emphasizing the Mission's reliance on the Windsor-Essex community on behalf of the Board and the staff at the Downtown Mission.
- The meeting was officially called to order at 5:36 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER: George Bozanich, Lead Chaplain of the Downtown Mission Chaplaincy Committee

God of all seasons and ages we thank you as we gather for the general meeting of the Downtown Mission. We give you thanks for our past year: for those folks fed, the hearts touched, the relationships built. At this time we recognize the challenges that we face, the violence of poverty, racism, homophobia, and the countless other ways that humans hate and hurt one another. We pray for your guidance in this meeting. We are grateful that we are not sent into these tasks alone, but are blessed with each person we share this moment with. Each of us has somehow been made in your image. Each of us bears resemblance to one another and to you. Help us to encourage that bit of you that is inside of each person that we meet and in ourselves as we offer our gifts and service. Keep us mindful of our sibling Jesus Christ who always sought your guidance and your will. Amen.

OPENING COMMUNITY MESSAGE: Abram called on Dr. Jennifer Bondy to share a few words.

Dr Bondy introduced herself as a family physician and Medical Director at Shelter Health. Shelter Health started having a presence at the Downtown Mission last summer, but this overall work was started four or five years ago. *We have a Hub and spoke model at four locations downtown. The Mission being one of them, the H-4 being one, the Welcome Center, and the Salvation Army. We are a partnership, which is between the City of Windsor, between CMHA Windsor Essex, between Windsor Regional Hospital and between ourselves, the physician group. What we're doing is recognizing there's lots of information that talks about the stigma that people experiencing homelessness confront when they are at healthcare providers like the emergency department or other healthcare providers. So what we are trying to do is remove the barriers to traditional care to encourage people to be able to come in. So we don't have a set appointment, we're right there on site trying to be as friendly as possible and get people in. People who are healthier are better able to engage and sometimes people just need a little bit of a kick start and if they can get things going with their health and get a positive win, then it's something that they have in their back pocket that they can then build on. But there are some people who won't necessarily get well enough to go on and be able to do everything we might hope for on their own. For those people disability assistance may be helpful and that's something we can help them with, transitioning to ODSP where appropriate. As I said before there's a lot of stigmas that these patients face, and so you might think, and so why would they want to come and see you. And while I'm not entirely sure, I assure you that part of the reason is the staff at the Downtown Mission. These are people who provide care and respect and dignity to the clients that they serve on a day-in-day-out basis. I have seen that every time that I've been over there and I'm in absolute awe of the work that they do. We've tried to form relationships with them because they have long-standing relationships with the clients, therefore, if they trust us then the clients might be more inclined to do so. We've been successful in large part to the staff at the Downtown Mission.*

I was perusing the website before coming in tonight, looking at the agenda and all of the other material that Ruk has sent out. When we talk about sanctuaries what does it mean, and as all of you probably know, it's a place of refuge and protection. The Downtown Mission provides day-to-day, this message of hope through caring. And I see this all the time. The website also tells the story of how the mission came to be, and it was very interesting for me to read. It's titled "Love Thy Neighbour" from Matthew 25:40. Just a little bit earlier in Matthew 25:13 to 14 to 30 they talk about the Parable of the Talons. That is a lot of things to a lot of different people and I am not a theologian, unfortunately, but I don't think you have to be particularly religious necessarily to be able to have a think about it. The Carmelites define Talons as love, service, and sharing. Father StAnne, who is a theologian, says in the book of Fire and Mercy that 'the greatest talon and treasure is our ability to love. There is an American author E.G. White from a couple of centuries ago and she said that the delicate touch of the physician's hand, his power over nerve and muscle, his knowledge of the delicate organisms of the body are the wisdom of the divine power to be used on behalf of the suffering of many.

I can tell you here, unequivocally, I love the Downtown Mission. I love the organization, I love the staff, I love the patients that we get to serve there. I hope that as physicians and nurses and the group at Windsor Shelter Health, we are able to be a part of the Downtown Mission's work. The food and shelter is a little hard for us to do directly but certainly we can help to nurture the spirit, to advocate, and to provide opportunities for human growth. I've seen probably hundreds of patients at this point at the Mission, and we've seen lots of things. We've seen diabetes, and skincare issues, cellulitis shin infections, I've seen people with primary psychotic disorders, and people with substance use disorder, but something I've seen common amongst a lot of the people who've come in the room is that we've given them opportunity to speak and I hope they feel lighter when they leave the room, and I have seen eyes that look a little bit brighter after they've had the opportunity to talk to someone who is a part of the very same system who has pushed them down for too long. And so, it is a tremendous privilege to be in the position that we're in, that we've been welcomed in. I hope that going forward we will have many years of partnership because it is really great to learn from patients and the staff.
Thank you.

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND OPENING PROCEDURES: Abram Banman, Interim Board Chair

i. Introduction:

Abram called on specific groups attending and asked them to raise their hands to be recognized:

- Downtown Mission Board of Directors
 - Mission Staff
 - City of Windsor representatives
 - Community Partners
 - Volunteers and Donors
 - Representatives from various churches, ministries, and schools supporting the Mission
- The Chair thanked all attendees for their presence and continued support of the Downtown Mission.

ii. Constitution

As Chair of The United Church Downtown Mission of Windsor Incorporated, I hereby declare this 42nd Annual General Meeting of The Corporation to be duly constituted with quorum for the transaction of business, including the receiving of reports, approval of the budget, appointment of auditors, the election of directors and any other business which might properly come before this meeting.

iii Voting Privileges

By Resolution of the Board of Directors, all those who have duly registered for the 2025 Annual General Meeting of The Downtown Mission, as well as those currently serving as Board Directors, are hereby granted voting privileges.

MOTION: That all other people present are corresponding members and may speak on the relevant matters of the meeting, restricted to twice on the same topic with a maximum of three (3) minutes on each occasion.

Dolph/Tanya
CARRIED

iv. **Notice of the Meeting**

The notice of the 42nd Annual General meeting was properly published on our website, newsletter and social media and forwarded to The United Church of Canada- General Council and Antler River Watershed Regional Council office, all employees, volunteers, and donors.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA of the 42nd AGM on May 28th, 2025.**

MOTION: That the agenda of the 42nd AGM be approved as presented.

Dolph/Joe
CARRIED

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES of 41st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING on April 24th, 2024.**

MOTION: That the Minutes of the 41st Annual General meeting be approved as presented.

Dolph/Chris
CARRIED

4. **REPORTS**

i. **Consideration of Annual Reports**

MOTION: That the written reports of the Chair and Executive Director, and all other reports of The Downtown Mission, be accepted as printed in the Annual Report.

Don/Dolph
CARRIED

ii. **Report of the Executive Director** Remarks from the ED: Rukshini Ponniah-Goulin NOTED:

- Expressed gratitude to everyone for their attendance and support of the Downtown Mission's work.
- Thanked community partners, staff, volunteers, and the Board of Directors for their guidance, leadership, and service.
- Rukshini read 2nd Corinthians chapter one verses 3 & 4 as a reminder of how our experience with adversity inspires us to help others and make us hopeful.
- Spoke about obstacles faced over the year such as increased demands for services, costs, operational cost. Yet the team showed remarkable resilience, faced the challenges together head-on.
- Highlighted Key Achievements:
 - Provided 139,667 meals to hungry people
 - Provided 34,144 beds in shelter for people who didn't have a safe place to lay their head.
 - We helped 34 young families with basic necessities like parenting support
 - We also supported 669 adults
- . More information about our support provided is available on our Impact Report, which is on the tables

iii. **Report of the Board Chair**

Remarks from the Interim Chair: Abram Banman

NOTED

- Abram thanked Rukshini, who puts her heart & soul in while never taking credit, but always sends the credit out to others.
- Abram reflected on Dr Bondy's speech and the idea of loving thy neighbour as thy self, the amazing amount of services that the Mission supplies to those who receive little love.

- He thanked the Volunteers, Donors, and the increasing government support
- Abram relayed that he often thinks of what John Bradford said in the 16th Century, "There but for the grace of God, go I". Abram relayed how many of us make poor decisions in our youth and how but for the grace of God many of us come out unscathed. He addressed that there are various reasons that guests find themselves in need of the DTM, and how they are accepted as they are without judgement, treated with kindness, compassion and love, worthy of neighbours as instructed by scripture.

5. CONSIDERATION OF THE AUDITOR'S REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, Treasurer

Remarks from Don Atwell

NOTED

- Noted that auditors for 2024 were Baker Tilly Trillium LLP, whose opinion qualifies the financial statement presentation.
- General fund has a surplus of \$72,000
- The capital (which is depreciation) fund \$139,000
- We had a combined deficit of \$66,000

MOTION: Whereas the Board of Directors met on May 26, 2025, to review the audited Financial Statements of the United Church Downtown Mission of Windsor; And whereas the Board has recommended to the Annual General Meeting of the Mission, be it hereby resolved that the audited Financial Statements as presented are approved.

Tanya/Chris
CARRIED

6. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR 2024

MOTION: Whereas the Board of Directors has recommended the firm of Baker Tilley LLP be retained as auditors for 2025/26; therefore, be it resolved that Baker Tilley LLP be so appointed.

Steuart/Fred
CARRIED

7. RATIFICATION OF ACTS

MOTION: That all acts undertaken in good faith in 2024 by directors, staff and volunteers in an attempt to ensure and maintain the effective and continuing operation of The United Church Downtown Mission of Windsor Inc., be hereby ratified.

Chris/Dolph
CARRIED

8. ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

i. Recognition of Outgoing Directors

- Tanya Kelly who has fulfilled her initial three-year terms was thanked for her service to the Board.
- Gratitude was extended to Dr. Rev. Cathy Collins-Barker and Dolph Barsanti for their contributions, as they finish their second term serving the Board
- These outgoing members have made significant contributions to the Mission's achievements, and their service is deeply appreciated and recognized.

ii. Election of New Directors: Chris Knowles, Chair of the Nominating Committee

MOTION: as recommended by the Nominating Committee and current Board Members, that Ashwini Kancheti, Carrie Davis, John Emans, Steuart Bruce, and Stuart Forsyth be appointed as Directors to the Board of the Downtown Mission effective May 28, 2025.

Joe/Don
CARRIED

iii. Slate of Current Directors: Abram Banman, Interim Chair

Abram ask the Directors to stand when their name was called. He made one motion to re-elect/appoint each of the following: himself, Abram Banman, Brian Porter – unable to attend this evening, Chris Knowles, Donald Atwell, Kristie McInnis – as unable to attend, Joseph DeLuca, and Marvio Vinhaes, unfortunately also unable to be with us this evening.

MOTION: That the following Directors continue their first term: Brian Porter, Chris Knowles, Donald Atwell, Joe DeLuca, and Marvio Vinhaes, and that the following Directors continue their second term: Abram Banman, and Kristie McInnis.

Dolph/Tanya
CARRIED

iv. **Membership of Directors:** Abram Banman

MOTION: That all Directors be made members of the Corporation of The United Church Downtown Mission of Windsor Incorporated for the duration of their respective terms.

Joe/Chris
CARRIED

9. NEW BUSINESS: Abram Banman

NOTED

i. **Bylaws 2025**

- During 2024 and early 2025, the Governance committee worked with Dana Young, a lawyer with Willis Business Law firm, to update our Bylaws to ensure full compliance with ONCA (the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations acts, 2010) and be in accordance with the Incorporated Ministry Policies of The United Church of Canada.
- There were no major material changes to the Bylaws

MOTION: That the Bylaws approved by the Board on February 26, 2025 be ratified, sanctioned and confirmed at this Annual General Meeting of The United Church Downtown Mission of Windsor, Inc.

Abram/Fred
CARRIED
ii.

10. Community Messages Emmanuel Lee, Enterprise Graduate, now Downtown Mission Employee

Testimonial from Emmanuel

- Shared that he had a troubled past then struggled in trying to get his first job and went through the Enterprise Program twice. After his first time through the Enterprise program he struggled with interviews and his lack of job experience to draw from.
- Enterprise, he said, gave him the experience of a lifetime. He enjoyed his placement at the Mission.
- He expressed the wealth of experience he has now had as an employee at the Downtown Mission. Working with the guest and building relationships with staff has been an experience that he could not have had anywhere else. From the staff he said he learn about providing true caring and compassionate service.
- Emmanuel expressed great gratitude to the Downtown Mission for all he has learned through his experience work there.

iii. **Next ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

MOTION: That the next 43rd Annual General Meeting of The Corporation be held on **Wednesday, April 29, 2026.**

Chris/Stuart
CARRIED

10. ADJOURNMENT of AGM: 6:24 p.m.

MOTION to adjourn this 42nd Annual General Meeting.

Tanya/Dolph

11. CLOSING PRAYER

Jim Hatt – Offered a prayer of hope and peace .

Abram Banman, Interim Chair

Edith Newell-Beattie, Executive Assistant