MINUTES
Board of Directors Meeting
International Lutheran Laymen's League

Online **Monday, January 26, 2026**

In Attendance: Kurt Senske, Chairman; Donald Scifres, Vice Chairman; Linda Arnold, Secretary; Kirk Farney, Treasurer; Karl Abraham; Melanie Braun; Ryan Bredow; Mark Duesenberg; Heidi Hove; Vincent James; Virginia Miller; Gordon Tresch; LHM CEO Kurt Buchholz, Ex Officio; Pastoral Advisor Rev. Tom Pfotenhauer, Ex Officio; LCMS Liaison Rev. Daniel Galchutt; LLL-Canada Managing Director Lisa Jackson; LCC Liaison Rev. Paul Zabel

Not in Attendance: Jim Dankenbring

LHM staff in attendance at request of CEO: Tony Cook, Global Chief Research & Innovation Officer; Lara Heisohn-Sidorski, Global Chief Administrative Officer; David Lanius, Chief Financial Officer; Joanna Lupo, Executive Assistant; Karin Semler, Global Chief Ministry Officer

01 Kurt Senske, Chairman, opened the meeting at 9:00 AM Central.

02 Kurt Buchholz, CEO, introduced Sarah Willis, LHM's new Chief Marketing and Engagement Officer.

03 Chairman Senske invited Tom Pfotenhauer, Pastoral Advisor, to lead an opening devotion. Pastoral Advisor Pfotenhauer asked the Board to keep the families of those recently passed in their prayers. He then led a devotion on Joshua 5:13-15, reflecting on Joshua's encounter with the angel of the Lord before Jericho. He then opened in prayer.

M 2025/26-16 Motion was made to approve the consent agenda, including: Approval of Meeting Agenda; Approval of October 2025 Meeting minutes.

Motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

04 Kirk Farney, Treasurer, invited David Lanius, CFO, to present the FY 2025/26 financial results through November 2025 (Q2).

CFO Lanius presented financials and Key Performance Indicators through Q2. He reported that while the budget projected a deficit of 420K for this time of year, the organization concluded Q2 with a surplus of 1.8 MM. He also reported that the line of credit with LCEF has been paid off. It has been a solid year for the LHM Foundation with gifts to endowment, undistributed portfolio earnings, and earning on gift annuities resulting in net asset gains exceeding $2M.

The Board asked questions and discussed throughout the presentation, with particular focus on growing the endowment and building-related updates.

05 Chairman Senske invited Rev. Dan Galchutt, LCMS Liaison, to provide his update.

LCMS Liaison Galchutt reported on the 2026 convention, Tell the Next Generation. There have been changes in leadership and three new hires to support chief officers. He also reported that there is a trend of increasing adult baptisms and confirmations. Church planting continues, missionary count is up, and new family ministry materials to encourage strengthening faith at home are available. The Board asked questions and discussed throughout the presentation.

06 Chairman Senske invited Lisa Jackson, LLL-Canada Managing Director, to give her report.

LLL-Canada Managing Director Jackson reported a strong year-end, driven by significant December contributions through digital and direct campaigns promoting gifts-in-kind. She also noted two recent trips to Nicaragua: one with four high school students and another in partnership with Team Zion, accompanied by four young adults. The LCC Convention is scheduled for June. The organization is transitioning radio operations in-house, with full station management expected to be internalized by March.

07 Chairman Senske invited Rev. Paul Zabel, LCC Liaison, to give his report.

Liaison Zabel reported an increase in adult confirmations across Canada. The Synodical Convention will be held in June. A new communications staff member has been hired for the local office. He also stated that the former district structure has been replaced with three regions. While many pastors are nearing retirement and overall church growth remains limited with more closures than openings. The current Synodical President is retiring.

08 CEO Buchholz asked if the Board had any questions regarding the reports in the docket. He then formally introduced Sarah Willis, LHM's new Chief Marketing and Engagement Officer.

Sarah Willis, CMEO, introduced herself and provided her personal and professional background. The Board welcomed her and asked follow-up questions.

The deep dive at the April meeting will focus on fundraising.

CEO Buchholz reported on moving globalization forward. He and Karin Semler, CMO, recently met with partners in Denmark to plant LHM's third regional office. They will be hiring a President of North America Ministries. He also announced that there are two new ministries in Tanzania and Bolivia, and expansion continues. Tony Cook, Chief Research and Innovation Officer, and his team are actively working on Project Barnabas, and operational plans laid out last year are moving forward.

The position for a Global CFO will post soon. The job description will be distributed to Board members.

Chairman Senske directed the Board to review the shared LHM Strategic Plan document, identify any gaps or concerns, and provide feedback. Board members were asked to have one-on-one conversations with CEO Buchholz prior to the April meeting, with a group discussion and approval planned at that time.

The Board asked questions and discussed throughout the presentation.

09 CEO Buchholz reported on the Strategic Plan, including concepts, data points, and measurements of success. A clean copy of this document will be available in BoardEffect after this meeting.

M 2025/26-17 Motion was made to accept the Strategic Plan as revised.

Motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

10 CEO Buchholz announced that the in-person Board Monitoring trip to Cambodia is scheduled for fall 2026. Spouses are invited at their own cost. He asked all Board members to make their interest known to him and/or Joanna Lupo by the April Board meeting. The Virtual Board Monitoring trip will feature Paraguay this summer.

11 CEO Buchholz invited Lara Heisohn-Sidorski, Global Chief Administrative Officer, to present an update on the organization's key performance indicators for FY26 Q2.

Global Chief Administrative Officer Heisohn-Sidorski reported on the organization's KPI performance in FY 2026. The Engaged Constituent number is the only currently behind goal. The Board asked questions and discussed throughout the presentation.

12 Global Chief Administrative Officer Heisohn-Sidorski reported on the Draft Fundraising Dashboard, focusing on overall giving trends, bequest health, and donor health data points. She emphasized that this data is different from standard financial reports in that the data is relatively live out of the database, it only includes domestic donations, and only gifts are shown.

The Board discussed and asked questions throughout the presentation, specifically regarding managing data and security, as well as notes on each data point and what should be added or changed. The team will provide an updated version at the April meeting.

13 Chairman Senske reported that the Executive Committee met to discuss the agenda of today’s meeting as well as Executive Session items. The committee also met to approve a resolution to accept a precious metals gift.

14 Melanie Braun, Audit Committee Chair, reported an updated language for the policy manual.

The Audit Committee coordinates with staff on organizational risk assessment and management to confirm compliance with 4.0 Global Executive Limitations Policy.

M 2025/26-18 Motion was made to approve the verbiage change as presented.

Motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

15 Chairman Senske reviewed the future meeting schedule of Board events and meetings, noting a joint education session with the LHM Foundation Board of Trustees in April.

Future Meeting Schedule:

- April 23-24, 2026 – St. Louis, MO
- July 16-17, 2026 – Phoenix, AZ
- October 22-23, 2026 – St. Louis, MO
- January 22, 2027 – Online
- April 22-23, 2027 – St. Louis, MO
- July 15-16, 2027 – St. Louis, MO
- October 21-22, 2027 – St. Louis, MO
- January 28, 2028 – Online

M 2025/26-19 Motion was made to enter Executive Session.

Motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

M 2025/26-20 Motion was made to leave Executive Session.

Motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

16 Mark Duesenberg led a closing prayer.

17 Meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM Central.

Respectfully submitted by,

Linda Arnold, Secretary