

**Commission to Unify the Office of the General Assembly and  
the Presbyterian Mission Agency  
Presbyterian Center, Louisville, KY – Conference Rooms 1C and 1B  
April 4-5, 2024**

**DRAFT Agenda**

<b>Thursday, April 4</b>		
9:00 am	Welcome and Call to Order	Felipe Martinez, Cristi Scott Ligon
	Convene with prayer	Bill Teng
	Land Acknowledgement	Kathy Lueckert
	Devotion: Vision 2020 Video - <a href="https://vimeo.com/677984771">https://vimeo.com/677984771</a>	Felipe Martinez
	Covenant	
	<i>Key Unifying Principles</i> : Relational, Streamlined, Nimble, Justice Focused, Vision Driven.	
	Approve minutes	
	Co moderators report	Felipe Martinez, Cristi Scott Ligon
	Communications Unification Update	Kathy Lueckert
10:00 a.m.	Break	
	Committee of the Whole — rest of the day	
12:00 pm	Lunch	
1:00 pm	Continue Committee of the Whole - continues	
3:00 pm	Break	
	Continue Committee of the Whole - continues Closed session if needed	
5:00 pm	Adjourn and closing prayer	Felipe Martinez
<b>Friday, April 5</b>		
9:00 am	Convene with prayer	Debra Avery
	Continue with committee of the whole if needed	
10:30 am	Break	
12:00 pm	Lunch	
1:00 pm	Reconvene in open session	
	Action items	
	Work group reports	
5:00 pm	Adjourn and closing prayer	Cristi Scott Ligon

**The Guiding Statement**

Our Reformed heritage understands the power of words and we humbly offer this Guiding Statement as speaking truth and declaring life.

The 2020 Vision Team was mandated by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and charged with developing a guiding statement for the denomination as it moves into the future.

In the faithful desire to discern the will of God we listened throughout the denomination and beyond, hearing hope and frustration, expectation and anxiety. Along our journey even when it is hard to see the way forward, God has spoken and continues to speak to us in these times and places.

Therefore, with renewed energy, we believe God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be:

**Prayerful**

- Confessing our sin to God and those we have wronged, we accept our responsibility for the brokenness in the world and in ourselves. In Christ we are assured of forgiveness and freed to forgive others.
- We ask the Holy Spirit to direct and guide us as we actively listen to Scripture and fully engage in the joys and challenges of life in this present world.
- By grace and love Christ binds us together, cleanses us in the waters of baptism, nourishes us at the Lord's table, and sends us out to share the Good News.

**Courageous**

- Reformed and always being reformed, we follow the Holy Spirit in new and imaginative ways to places we have not yet been.
- We foster the hope of reconciliation in Christ who transforms the world through healing individuals, communities, and creation.
- We work for God's justice and peace for all people in every land, walking with the vulnerable, the marginalized, the oppressed, and the abused.

**United**

- As members of the Church universal, we are Christ's disciples, called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- Against forces that seek to divide, Christ compels us to bear witness to a love that connects communities across great differences.
- We approach others in a spirit of openness and trust as we follow Jesus Christ in respecting the freedom of other religions, worldviews, and traditions.

**Serving**

- Gratefully following the One who washed his disciples' feet, we listen to our neighbors, working to meet their practical needs.
- We partner with others to become the hands and feet of God in the world, showing compassion and generosity to all creation.
- The Holy Spirit pushes us beyond the familiar, meeting people where they are as we share Christ's transformative love.

**Alive**

- We are people of the resurrection: though death surrounds us, we are not afraid because we follow the One who was raised from the tomb.
- The Holy Spirit gives us courage to trust each other and build a community that reflects the fullness of God's image in humanity: beautifully diverse in age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexuality, physical and mental ability, geography, theological conviction, and viewpoints.
- In the sure and certain hope of resurrection, we joyfully testify that the Church and its members are called to follow Christ's model by risking all, even life itself, for the sake of the Gospel.

And so, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be: Prayerful, Courageous, United, Serving, Alive. Thanks be to God.

**Commission for the Unification  
of the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency**

**COMMISSION COVENANT**

- To pray for one another
- To speak and listen with respect
- To inhale and exhale, to remember to breathe
- To have a posture of open mindedness, ready to listen, not quick to make decisions but seek understanding first
- To offer grace as we share collective witness
- To address things authentically, transparently and directly
- To make tough decisions
- To not be bound by our assumptions
- To be open to the Spirit's new options we haven't even considered
- To stay trusting in God
- To know when to speak and act, and know when to be quiet and wait for decisions to come in their time
- To be sensitive to the mindset of staff from OGA and PMA, to pray for them, to be a calming force
- To be consistent in how we communicate officially and unofficially
- To not take ourselves too seriously
- To support and care for one another

*Adopted on December 17, 2022*

**Draft – Not yet approved**

**Commission to Unify the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency**  
**Minutes**  
**Online**  
**February 17, 202**

## Gathering

The Commission to Unify the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (“the Unification Commission”) held their fifteenth meeting online using Zoom, an online audio and web conferencing platform. The public was able to watch in real-time (and view a recording) via Vimeo, a video sharing platform, on the website of the Office of the General Assembly. Materials, including the agenda and minutes, were available to the public via EQUIP, a learning management system administered by the Officer of the General Assembly.

## Roll

The roll was formed:

Commissioners (as appointed by the Co-Moderators of the 225th General Assembly (2022); criteria and demographics included for the record):

Felipe N. Martínez, Co-Moderator, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Ohio Valley;  
 Commissioner, 225th General Assembly (2022)

Cristi Scott Ligon, Co-Moderator, Ruling Elder, Presbytery of Middle Tennessee;  
 Commissioner, 225th General Assembly (2022) [remote participant on Zoom]

Debra Avery, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Great Rivers; Moving Forward  
 Implementation Special Committee

Carson Brown, Ruling Elder, Presbytery of Peace River; Young Adult Advisory  
 Delegate, 225th General Assembly (2022)

Dee Cooper, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Denver; Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

Dave Davis, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of the Coastlands; Committee on the Office of  
 the General Assembly

Frances Lin, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Riverside; At-Large [Ordained Aug. 11, 2023]

Scott Lumsden, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Seattle; Per Capita and Financial  
 Sustainability Special Committee

José Rosa-Rivera, Ruling Elder, Presbiterio de San Juan; Per Capita and Financial  
 Sustainability Special Committee

Bill Teng, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Peace River; Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),  
 A Corporation Board

Kris Thompson, Ruling Elder, Presbytery of National Capital; At-Large

## Ex-Officio:

Ruth Faith Santana-Grace, Co-Moderator, 225th General Assembly (2022)

## Staff:

Barry Creech, Deputy Executive Director for Administration, Presbyterian Mission Agency

Jennifer Clowery, interpreter

Kathleen Henrion, communications specialist

Kathy Lueckert, President, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

Kerry Rice, Deputy Stated Clerk, Office of the General Assembly

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## Excused:

Emily Martin, Ruling Elder, Presbytery of North Central California; Young Adult  
Advisory Delegate, 225th General Assembly (2022)

Opening Prayer  
and Devotion

Cristi Scott Ligon, co-moderator of the Commission to Unify the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (“Unification Commission”), called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. ET on February 17, 2024, with an opening prayer offered by Frances Lin.

Land  
Acknowledgment

Scott Lumsden led the land acknowledgment, informed by the Presbytery of Seattle, which recognized the ancestral lands of Coast Salish Peoples, specifically the first people of Seattle, the Duwamish People, original stewards of the land, past and present. It was noted the terms of the Treaty of Point Elliott, signed on January 22, 1855, by the leaders of the 55 tribes, had not been honored by the United States government. The work of the Presbytery of Seattle included researching the history of the settling of the (then) Oregon Territory.

## Agenda

By common consent, without edits or objections, the Unification Commission adopted the agenda. Some of the materials, including the agenda and minutes, were available to the public via EQUIP, a learning management system administered by the Office of the General Assembly.

## Minutes

Without objection, the Minutes of the January 18-19, 2024, meeting were approved.

## Covenant

Cristi Scott Ligon, as co-moderator, read the covenant as a reminder of how the Unification Commission had agreed to engage this responsibility of this commission.

Key Unifying  
Principles

Felipe Martínez, co-moderator, reminded the Unification Commission of their key unifying principles: Relational; Streamlined; Nimble; Justice Focused; and, Vision Driven.

Co-Moderator  
Report

Felipe Martínez provided the Co-Moderators Report. Their work included a briefing and planning for future meetings. Individually or together the co-moderators participated in the Consultations, and the Governance work groups, in addition to perfecting the draft report of the Unification Commission to the 226th General Assembly (2024) to be discussed later in the meeting.

Communications  
Update

Upon recognition, Kathleen Henrion, communications specialist, reported there was not much to share for an update on the communications of the Unification Commission.

Communications  
Unification

Felipe Martínez referred to the report on the process to unify the communications. The report (“UniComm Report”) was circulated with the advance materials prior to the meeting (**Attachment 1**) and publicly available via EQUIP. The report was authored by Bronwen Boswell, Acting Stated Clerk, Office of the General Assembly, and Corey Schlosser-Hall, Deputy Executive Director of Vision, Rebuilding and Innovation, Presbyterian Mission Agency. The project remained on schedule in the timeline, in Stage 2, as noted in the report.

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There was a discussion if the Unification Commission should seek additional communications support from the Unified Communications (“UniComm”). It was noted that UniComm is scheduled to be integrated in April 2024, and would be focused on the 226th General Assembly (2024) and the new denominational website. UniComm may be able to lend support to the Unification Commission after the General Assembly to serve as a project manager on the communications efforts of the Unification Commission.

Culture Consultant  
Update

Upon recognition, Dee Cooper provided a verbal update on the identification of the consultants to interview. It was noted that the various facets extended beyond the cultural concepts to also include racial perspectives and various leadership models.

Pivoting to the Consultations work group, Dee Cooper noted there were three remaining consultations scheduled. Finally, the summary of the Listening Sessions, prepared by the Research Services Group, was distributed prior to the meeting (**Attachment 2**), and was available on EQUIP for public viewing.

Finance: Work  
Group Update

Upon recognition, Scott Lumsden, facilitator, began the update for the Finance Work Group by reviewing the report (**Attachment 3**), which was posted on EQUIP and available for public viewing. This report included the items recommended for affirmation and approval of the Finance Work Group for the Unification Commission. The Finance Work Group has met twice since the January 2024 meeting and with the executive team have been putting together the 2025-2026 budget.

There was a desire to provide clarity and affirm the 2025-2026 Unifying Budget Values and Vision Statement developed by the executive team and the Coordinating Table at their January 2024 budget process retreat. Staff provided a summary of the budget process and timeline.

2025-2026  
Unifying Budget  
Values and Vision  
Statement

Upon recommendation of the Finance Work Group, after discussion and without objection, the Unification Commission voted to approve the Unifying Budget Values and Vision Statement for 2025-2026, as follows:

**2025-2026 Unifying Budget Values**

Led by the Spirit, we will be ...

- Open to discerning and embracing new ways of embodying our work
- Courageous, willing to risk failure as we pursue new possibilities
- Centered in equity and justice, and
- Trustworthy colleagues and partners in ministry

As we are sent outward in service to church and world

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2025-2026 Unifying Budget Vision Statement

We envision that this budget will enable us to be...

A partner in mission and ministry,  
complementing and strengthening congregations, mid councils and other faith  
communities, and stewarding faithfully all of our resources.

This budget equips the PC(USA) to be...

formed and re-formed as a covenant community of vibrant and growing  
disciples who embody a fresh expression of a Reformed witness to Christ's  
love and justice in the world,  
present and responsive to the challenges of this time.

Financial  
Allocation of  
226th GA (2024)  
Actions

The Finance Work Group addressed the second item in their report, regarding the financial allocation of actions of the 226th General Assembly (2024) beyond the 2025-2026 budgets. The approach to financial allocations from previous General Assemblies was discussed. With an anticipated unified budget and a transformed budget process, the recommendation was to apply Per Capita funds to financial implications beyond the presented 2025-2026 budgets. There was a discussion about how the General Assembly would be informed of the financial impact of the Assembly's actions.

Upon recommendation of the Finance Work Group, after discussion and without objection, the Unification Commission voted to allocate all actions of the 226th General Assembly (2024) that have financial implications outside of the presented 2025-2026 budgets to be charged to per capita funds.

Revised 2024  
Mission Budget of  
the IT Roadmap

The Finance Work Group discussed the financial impact of the Information Technology Roadmap, which also impacted the 2024 General Assembly Mission Budget. Item A.102 in the Finance Work Group's report included the detailed request as approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. The original requests were distributed and discussed at the January 2024 Unification Commission meeting, including Phase III of the IT Roadmap. The increase in the IT Roadmap was offset by additional funding sources. The Finance Work Group recommended the request for approval.

Upon recommendation of the Finance Work Group, after discussion and without objection, the Unification Commission voted to approve the Revised 2024 General Assembly Mission Budget.

Governance: Work  
Group Update

Upon recognition, Debra Avery, facilitator, provided a verbal update for the Governance Work Group. The new governance structure was the first focus, with the new agency structure as the next anticipated focus. Details were anticipated for the April 2024 meeting for any transitional structures and their anticipated length of time. It was recognized that more information was needed on the current functions of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly ("COGA"), and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board ("PMAB"). It was noted that COGA and PMAB have representation on the Unification Commission (though Dave Davis and Dee Cooper, respectively), who could serve as timely conduits of requests and information to their respective entities.



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Unification  
Commission  
Report to the  
226th GA (2024)

Felipe Martínez, co-moderator, addressed the next item on the agenda, the Unification Commission Report to the 226th General Assembly (2024). This draft report (**Attachment 4**) was distributed in advance of the meeting and publicly available on EQUIP. It was noted there would be an edit of the actual number of consultations would be 24.

The draft report served an executive summary, since all the minutes through December 31, 2023, would be attached to the report. Separately, it was noted that EQUIP would remain a resource for all the documents. Raymond Bonwell, recorder, was thanked for contributions to the report. Acting on the report at this meeting would meet the posted deadline.

There was a motion and second to approve the Report to General Assembly. After discussion and without objection, the Unification Commission voted to approve the Unification Commission Report to the 226th General Assembly (2024).

Confidentiality  
Concerns

Cristi Scott Ligon, co-moderator, addressed the next item on the agenda. The Unification Commission Co-Moderators were made aware of a statement attributed to a commission member of anticipated staffing changes and anticipated voluntary separations for staff of a certain age.

Cristi Scott Ligon, addressing staff of PMA and OGA, and those viewing the livestream (or its recording), stated clearly that the Unification Commission has neither discussed, nor made, such statements or discussions. While changes should be anticipated – given the nature of the work of the Unification Commission – Cristi Scott Ligon noted the Commission has not identified any such changes.

If there are specific questions, Cristi Scott Ligon and Felipe Martínez welcomed them as co-moderators of the Commission. Commissioners were reminded of the importance of confidence, and the viewing public was reminded of the importance of continuing to pray for the Commission.

Cristi Scott Ligon and Felipe Martínez thanked the commissioners for their work.

Executive Session

Felipe Martínez noted the agenda called for the Unification Commission to meet in executive session. The process for the executive (closed) session would be to keep the public-facing stream (and recording) going, while the Commission met in executive (closed) session. Felipe Martínez noted the Commission would return to the livestream (and recording) to report any action taken.

Upon motion, second, and an opportunity for discussion, the Unification Commission entered executive session to address personnel and property matters. Staff were invited to participate in the executive session. (Recorder's Note: Ex-Officio members have privilege to participate in the executive session, and do not need an express invitation.)

Rising from  
Executive Session

The Unification Commission voted to rise from executive session, and no action was taken.

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Comments for the  
Good of the Body,  
Closing Prayer,  
and Adjournment

There were no further comments from commissioners or staff. The Commission was reminded the next stated meeting is Thursday, March 21, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. ET on Zoom. [Recorder's Note: the Co-Moderators cancelled this meeting, given the proximity to the in-person meeting scheduled for April 4-6, 2024.] Without objection and by common consent, the meeting was adjourned with a closing prayer at 4:35 p.m. ET.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Raymond Bonwell  
Recorder

**UniComm Report: Startup more than a Mashup**

April 1, 2024

*Rev. Bronwen Boswell and Dr. Corey Schlosser-Hall*

We have established a process map for unifying communications (see UniComm RoadMap on page 2). The circled area is where we are in the process by the time of the UC meeting. We are expecting to celebrate a new, unifying communications ministry by our gathering April 15, 2024. Right now, we are in Stage Three of the process—"Rebuilding." We celebrate that **Rick Jones** has accepted the appointment to serve as the Director of communications for the new unifying ministry and began this work March 1!

**Stage 1 - Reflect & Review (December 11, 2023 – February 5, 2024): To come to terms with our mutual histories and present realities.**

We had a wonderful gathering on **February 5** to move toward completion of this phase that was kicked off on December 11, 2023. If you are interested, we can send the agenda, slidedeck, and some work products from that gathering. The Reflect and Review Task Force did a fantastic job of:

- 1) Assembling an overview *History of national communications ministry 1990-present*.
- 2) Assembling a full Comms Ministry *2024 Pictorial Directory* for all comms to refer to.
- 3) Capturing in 1 screen view all of the projects both comms teams produce annually. WOW!
- 4) Data set of the competencies, strengths, work histories of those serving comms ministries in OGA and PMA. It's a remarkable team who brings a huge wealth of abilities and experiences together.
- 5) Also, Bronwen and Corey completed our *1:1s with every person*. These elicited really useful insight to the positive, hopeful attitudes of people from both teams and the overwhelming sense that we will be better together than we can be apart. Along with some important concerns that we will be addressing along the way.

As part of this gathering, we identified the strengths and positive attributes we'd like to carry forward in our backpack" into the new UniComm. We also identified dynamics, stories, past hurts and difficulties that we'd like to leave behind. Bronwen led us to "close the book" on those...literally!

**Stage 2 - Revise & Re-Envision (Feb 5- March 15) —To articulate a preferred future including vision, mission for communications ministry and test it with stakeholders.**

Our Revise and Re-Envision task force did a great job researching, exploring and articulating a vision, mission and preferred future. On **March 15** they tested it with all communications staff and received great affirmation and a few bits of feedback for modification. This team is finalizing this document testing with other stakeholders now and will continue that testing in the near future.

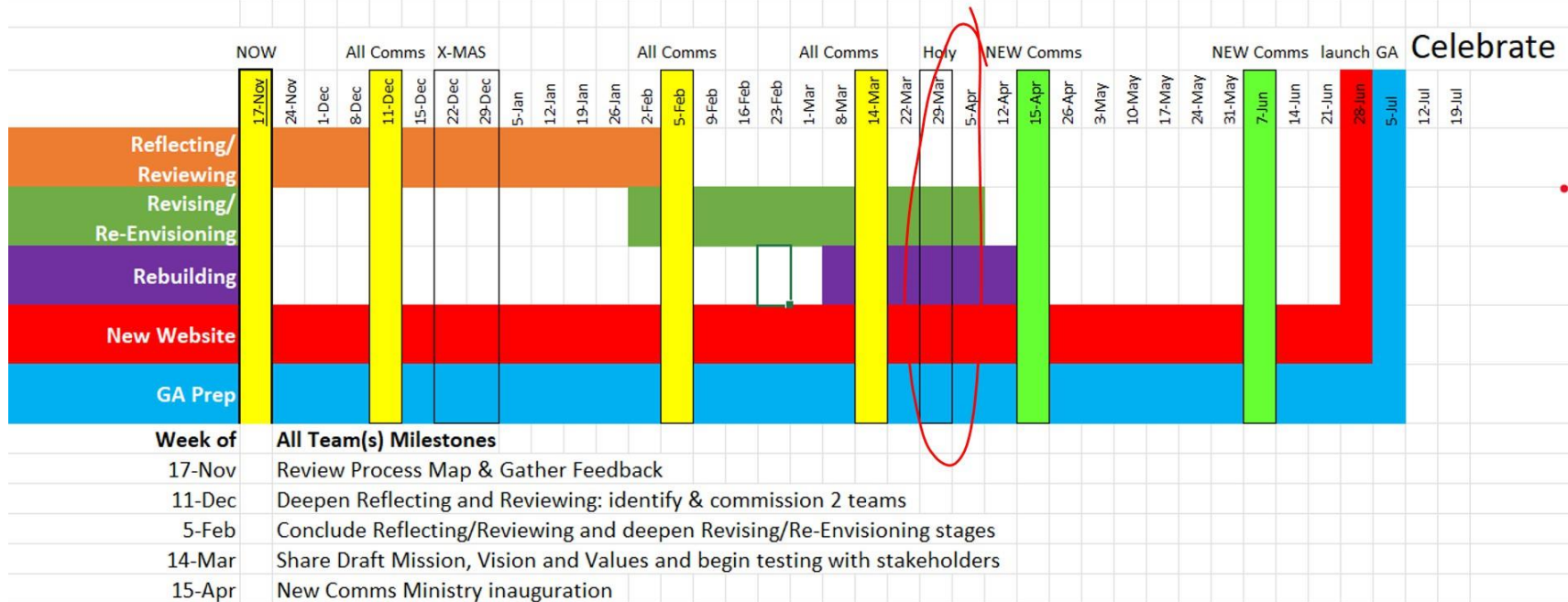
**Stage 3 - Rebuilding a New Ministry (March 15 – end of April)—To name the new communications ministry personnel, operations, and game plan for the present and future.**

We are thrilled that **Rick Jones**, former OGA Communications Director has accepted the appointment to serve as the new Communications Ministry Director. He began that role on March 1. [See article here](#). We are in the process of clarifying lines of authority and accountability, people and teams assignments, budgetary and financial resource flows, and other operational details to be completed by the April 15 UniComm gathering in Louisville where we will celebrate this new communications ministry!

Where are we on the RoadMap?

## UniComm Roadmap

Unifying Communications Ministry



**Unification Commission Consultations Report**  
**April 2024**

The Consultations Workgroup continues to complete outstanding consultations.

**2024**

February 13	10:30 AM	Mission Networks	Felipe, Kathy, Carson	
February 29	7:00 PM	Vision 2020	Felipe, Kathy, Frances	
March 13	9:00 AM	Global Partners	Frances, Kathy Carson	Sadly, this one was canceled after technology and confusion on timing. They have been invited to turn in answers to questions.
April 15th	2:00 PM	Former moderators/Co moderators of GA	Felipe, Cristi, and Dee scribe	

**Consultant Sub Team**

We connected and communicated with five different consulting groups. Two submitted proposals. Members of the Task Force met with the two to discuss their proposals on March 22. The task force will then review recordings of interviews and make decisions about the next steps.

# Finance Workgroup Report // April 2024

Unification Commission Meeting, Louisville

**Summary:** Much of our work since our last in person meeting has been focused on receiving progress reports on the 2025/26 Budget. Those updates have mostly come from Barry, Kerry, and Ian – but we're aware this is a total (Executive) team effort. And a remarkably good one at that.

**The 2025/26 Budget:** We want to commend the staff for their diligent and collaborative work in making this first unified budget a significant step toward streamlining and simplifying the financial work related to supporting the ministries of the General Assembly. Progress toward unification is being made every day as prior financial assumptions are being rethought and reshaped toward shared ministry between PMA and OGA. There's still a lot of work to be done, but we are very encouraged by the dedication to this process by the Executive Team and their respective staffs.

**Zero Based Budget:** An important change in the budgeting process for 2025/26 is the implementation of zero based budgeting. For many years ministry areas have assumed a certain budget level (regardless of whether it was completely utilized). This in turn could make revenue function like dedicated funds for a particular ministry area. We understand that the change to zero based budgeting has inserted some anxiety into the budget process, however we also appreciate the potential it has to create a more sustainable and unified budget going forward. To that end, a whole new budget process was created (in short order) for director level staff to implement. We commend Ian and his staff for leading that effort. (And yes, thank you emails were sent to key staff from the finance workgroup!)

**Budget Approval:** Perhaps the biggest challenge in our oversight of the budget is the limited time we'll have to review and approve the budget before the GA deadline. We are receiving regular updates on the budget process, but we should note that according to the written opinion we received from the Stated Clerk, the Unification Commission has been delegated the authority to approve the budget that is presented to the General Assembly.

**Timeline for Approval:** OGA and PMA have a joint meeting on Tuesday May 7th in which the 2025/26 Budget will be presented for their approval. The deadline to submit the budget to GA is May 11. This means that the Commission would need to approve the budget sometime within that May 7-11 window. (We currently have a zoom meeting scheduled for 5/18.)

**Reserves:** We have a meeting with Ian (and others) scheduled for 3/28 to discuss the question of reserve policies and practices going forward. We'll have more to share in person about those issues and what they mean for the 2025/2026 Budget process and beyond.

## Governance Workgroup Report

April 2024

**Summary:** Since the last Commission meeting, our team has primarily focused on getting clarity about what parameters are needed to develop more fully the roles and responsibilities of the NewGov and NewAg. Our work included developing a better understanding of the work of PMA and OGA and their respective governing boards.

**Meeting with the Coordinating Table:** We consulted with the members of the Coordinating Table (CT), including agency executives. They provided helpful responses to our questions about the budget process, including the 4 categories they created to help focus the budgeting work. They shared the challenges of planning for their various ministries given that this is the first experience using a zero-based budget approach. We celebrate their creativity in this. We lift up their work to decouple mission/ministry priorities from organizational structure and are excited for the collaboration this has engendered. One staff member described this process as “healthy organizational culture intervention”. Current work of the CT includes determining “transversals” which are threads that are woven throughout.

**Meeting with Deputies:** We also met with Kerry Rice and Barry Creech to learn more about the specific responsibilities of OGA, PMA, and their respective Committee and Board, especially with an eye toward planning for interim governance. Our big question: what are the vital functions that we may want to ensure don’t fall through the cracks during unification? During this conversation, we learned a lot about logistical and vision work currently being done. We also uncovered some key questions that will need to be addressed regarding agency relationships with other entities and agencies. This will help us as we discern the next steps toward mapping unification.

**Interim Governance:** With the understanding that our focus in this next season will be laying the groundwork for interim governance, we have sent polity questions to the Stated Clerk’s office to better understand any limitations we might have with interim and/or transitional processes.

**Gratitude:** We want to note - and give thanks for - the work being done by elected and staff leaders to prepare both agencies for the transition to come. We’re grateful for the accessibility to information and for staff time to respond to questions we have had.