

The Joint Standing Committee on Planning and Arrangements  
June 15, 2020 1:30 p.m. EDT

Attending:

Members – Devon Anderson, Michael Barlowe, Kurt Barnes, Diane Jardine Bruce, Michael Curry, Wendell Gibbs, Mary Gray-Reeves, Gay Jennings, Bryan Krislock, Ryan Kusumoto, Karen Patterson, Bryon Rushing, Scott Slater, Eugene Sutton, Patricia Wellnitz

Invited Guests – Sally Johnson, Mary Kostel, Sean Rowe.

Staff – Marian Conboy, Patrick Haizel, Fiona Nieman, Chuck Robertson, Stephanie Spellers, Mark Stevenson

The Chair, Michael Barlowe, asked Eugene Sutton to offer an opening prayer. He then asked if everyone had received the agenda and other reports that had been posted. Canon Barlowe told the committee that the Presiding Officers had convened a consulting group consisting of the vice presidents of both houses, the parliamentarians, the chancellors, the Treasurer and the Executive Officer to look into options for convening General Convention, given the pandemic. He explained that while no decision would be made today, the purpose of this meeting is to receive an interim report of that group and answer any questions that might arise. He further explained that we have contracts in place for a June 28-July 7, 2021 meeting and that we will incur cancellation fees of around two to three million dollars if we change that scheduled event.

Sean Rowe explained that the group had considered various scenarios, keeping several factors in mind – public health, the economic impact on the city of Baltimore and the governance and polity of our church. He presented a scenario of a two-phase General Convention. Phase I would be in the summer of 2021 and would be largely virtual. General Convention would adjourn to 2022 and assemble more participants for Phase Two. It is difficult to say how many people could gather in 2022, since future public health guidelines are unknown at this time.

Sally Johnson called everyone's attention to the documents she posted, most specifically the highlights. Canonically, the Joint Standing Committee on Planning and Arrangements is essential to decision-making regarding the dates of General Convention. There is precedence for dates and venue being changed due to extenuating circumstances. Presiding Officers and Executive Council approval of a change is also necessary.

Canon Barlowe asked Eugene Sutton and Scott Slater to comment on what a delayed or postponed General Convention would mean to the diocese. Bishop Sutton said that the diocese is anxious to tell their story, but they are very aware that Baltimore and also

surrounding counties in the Diocese of Washington are among the hardest hit, especially the black and brown communities. Their ability to recruit volunteers would also be impacted.

During questions and discussion, Diane Bruce asked about elections, how would they be held, and also about the significant conversations that General Convention will want to have. Ryan Kusumoto inquired whether people elected in Phase Two would have a shortened term. Since term length for most positions is determined by close of GC , it could mean a shortened term for those elected. Joint Nominating Committee for the Election of a Presiding Bishop is one with new membership requirements since 2018 and would have to be looked at separately. Scott Slater asked when in 2022 Phase Two might occur – before Lent? Middle of winter? Patrick Haizel said that we have to look at when there is availability, as many groups are rescheduling their events. Devon Anderson said that we also have to decide how to instruct interim bodies. Michael Barlowe said that his inclination is to keep the Blue Book deadline the same and not to delay the reporting. This would allow the opportunity for the church to deal with reports as necessary.

There were no other questions or discussion at this time.

Mary Gray-Reeves offered a closing prayer. There was no other business and the meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marian Conboy