

**ITEM B.200
FOR INFORMATION**

**JINISHIAN MEMORIAL PROGRAM UNITED STATES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES,
MAY 15-16 2014**

Draft Minutes of the Jinishian Memorial Program United States Advisory Committee of the
Presbyterian Mission Agency Board
of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Howard High School, Wilmington, DE
May 15-16, 2014

CALL TO ORDER AND
PRAYER

The meeting of the Jinishian Memorial Program (JMP) United States
Advisory Committee (USAC) of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board
was called to order by the Chair, Vicki Gehrt at 10:15 a.m. Martin Lifer
opened in prayer.

ATTENDANCE

Those present for all or a portion of the meeting were:

*United States Advisory
Commission (USAC) and
Governance Commission
Members*

Vicki Chopourian Gehrt– Chair

Michael Haratunian

Mark Momjian

Greg Allen-Pickett—General Manager (World Mission), arrived 11:30 a.m.

*Governance Commission
Members Only*

Rev. Martin Lifer—Governance Commission Chair

Rev. Jack Hodges

Staff

Eliza Minasyan—Coordinator/Executive Director (JMP)

Cara Taylor– Administrative Assistant (JMP), Recorder

EXCUSED

Amgad Beblawi—Area Coordinator, Middle East, Europe, and
Central Asia (World Mission)

MINUTES – October 17,
2013

USAC VOTED to approve the JMP USAC Minutes of October 17, 2013
and the January 2014 teleconference minutes.

ACTION

PRESBYTERIAN
FOUNDATION REPORT
INFORMATION

Anita Clemons, Vice President of Investments at the Presbyterian
Foundation, joined the meeting via Skype conference call and presented a
Jinishian endowment fund report.

The endowment fund payout dropped in 2014 and is projected to do so
again in 2015 due to the spending formula which builds in an 18 month lag

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time and is reviewed annually. Distributions have dropped accordingly because they are calculated by multiplying the number of shares by the payout. Managers anticipated that rates will rise beginning in 2016; this drop in payout has continued since Cambridge was hired to manage the fund and implemented this formula. Consequently, although the capital has grown \$2.5 million, it is not yet reflected in JMP's budget. The diversified manager list and comparison to other portfolios in JMP's peer universe indicated that JMP's fund is comparable with no huge tilts in any direction. All the figures presented were gross values and did not reflect the Mission Agency shared services fees (8%) that are charged monthly (on the 20th). The committee noted that shared services should drop to 6% after relocation of the director's office, which JMP must renegotiate after the move. In response to questions about the fee structure, .25% goes to Cambridge, which holds control and responsibility for management, and one percent goes to the Foundation. The fees were a source of concern, and Anita stated that reducing them is a goal.

Anita offered to report back on three questions:

- (1) Why did Mission Agency fees change in March 2014?
- (2) What is the real cost of the fees coming out of the fund?
- (3) What is the total market value (decrease) over the last 10 years?

The committee expressed appreciation with the quality of the report and noted that development efforts need to make up for the lost revenues from the fund in recent years.

JMP EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR PROGRESS
REPORT
INFORMATION

Eliza Minasyan reported that, using the Strategic Plan devised last fall for 2015-2019, all country directors gathered in Lebanon in April to craft their action plans, which are already being implemented.

Eliza observed that JMP gets the best value for invested dollars of any other like organization. She is enormously proud of what is being accomplished with the gift entrusted by Vartan Jinishian.

The committee expressed great thanks to Eliza for her leadership. Eliza thanked Greg Allen-Pickett and Amgad Beblawi for the trust, freedom, and support she has experienced, as well as their advocacy for JMP projects.

ARMENIA COUNTRY
REPORT
INFORMATION

Eliza Minasyan presented Country Director Armen Hakobyan's report. The program has about 24 people on staff. Only 50% of budget comes from US JMP. Civil Society and Economic Development are the largest programs. They target areas where there is no activity so JMP can jump start development, encourage volunteerism, and attract other agencies, tourism, etc. before pulling back to let the communities continue growth on their own. Community development cultivates local leadership for projects that improve their communities (schools, parks and water ecology). They build employment opportunities for women through fair trade toy production and, in Georgia where Armenians experience great discrimination, through vocational training and wool art. Health prevention projects include orthopedic treatment, hip dysplasia, infant health, child development, nurse training, children's rehabilitation centers, veteran and disabled services in Nagorno-Karabagh, and a medical networking congress. Summer camps

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provide discipleship and peacemaking skills for children. Christmas package distribution for children engages staff, youth and other beneficiaries. Debate clubs attract the most international donors because of they meet a need to strengthen youth for democracy in the future.

ACTION

After extensive discussion regarding the expansion and remodel of the Yerevan office building proposed by fellow building occupants, and awaiting a final offer with all the details, the committee moved to require a report before any final action is taken or official agreement made. We understand this to be the addition of attic space and improvements to the entrance, stairways, and elevator. **APPROVED.**

**LEBANON COUNTRY
REPORT
INFORMATION**

Eliza Minasyan presented Lebanon country report on behalf of Lebanon Country Director Pauline Sagherian. Most projects focus on social and medical assistance with 14,000 cases last year. One-hundred and six Syrian families in Lebanon have been assisted by JMP. The staff worked hard on a fundraising raffle. An Armenian benefactor donated money to buy the lot adjacent to JMP property to initiate projects for youth at risk in 2011. Finally, the reconstruction process has been completed; this was a great step forward. It will be a center for young girls for training. Newly appointed Country Director Pauline Sagherian is doing an amazing job, is fully involved, and has insured a smooth leadership transition.

ACTION

The United States Advisory Committee **VOTED** to extend contract to Pauline Sagherian as Lebanon Country Director and to extend term of current Lebanon Advisory Board members for one year.

**SYRIA COUNTRY REPORT
INFORMATION**

Eliza Minasyan presented report. Syria Country Director Talin Topalakian is remarkable: reliable, hardworking, with great faith and hope. She communicates regularly via email and phone. Zabel Yirikian's work in Damascus has been exceptional during siege time. The staff worked every day, never closed throughout the violence, and felt encouraged to have a wonderful mission to complete in horrible times. They have done great networking and increased coordination with other organizations. In addition to financial and material support, they gather the Armenian community for entertainment, prayer, encouraging talks, etc. School is the only entertainment for children in Syria nowadays, yet it is often cancelled because of danger. Talin introduced new projects organizing gatherings for children to occupy and encourage them in wartime because they are the most impacted. Water is a critical, ongoing problem. Staff made many visits to clients' homes, even though all movement is risky. Grants up to \$150 are given to families for food, clothes, fuel, and rent. Up to \$50 monthly are given to elderly or disabled. Eliza has inquired about giving more, but the Syria staff wants to provide just enough for current essentials. They would rather accumulate savings so that when war ends they can support significant development projects at that point. The value of the US dollar has nearly tripled. People from Kessab are more or less settled in Latakia. Most displaced people live in multifamily homes. The committee greatly appreciated Talin's very detailed report.

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ACTION	<p>USAC VOTED to extend contract for Talin Topalakian as Syria Country Director. USAC directed Eliza to communicate strongly to Talin what a blessing her ministry is and to ask her to let us know whatever she needs.</p> <p>USAC VOTED to renew Zabel Yirikian's contract in Damascus.</p>
TURKEY AND ISRAEL COUNTRY REPORTS INFORMATION	<p>Eliza Minasyan reported that in Istanbul, JMP clients cannot get a pension in Turkey because they could not register their work. Vocational training helps children to gain better job preparedness skills through computer and English literacy. Low interest loans are granted to a few small businesses. Discussion ensued about phasing out this site over time because new elderly will be receiving pensions, the local population has the capacity to support the community, and our funds have been in decline. Some consideration was given to keeping a foothold among influential Armenians in Istanbul.</p> <p>A medical clinic, summer camps, grants to local Armenian organizations, and family allowances constitute JMP program in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. This small population has less local support, operating with all volunteers yet a strategic location. Eliza has proposed a project for young families to improve abandoned properties and thus build up declining Christian neighborhoods.</p>
JMP FINANCIAL REPORT INFORMATION	<p>More than \$25,000 was raised in Armenia for Kessab. Syria and Lebanon are already helping Kessab refugees from their extra budget. Most US donations, totaling \$15,000, went to Syria. There will be no cuts in 2015 to the four country program budgets.</p>
JMP 2015 BUDGET ACTION	<p>Motion to revise 2015 budget, moving the proposed \$19,000 increase from Armenia's budget to Syria's budget instead. USAC VOTED to approve the JMP 2015 budget as revised.</p>
RECESS	<p>The committee recessed at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday.</p>
RECONVENE	<p>The committee reconvened at 8:30 a.m. on Friday.</p>
RELOCATION FEASIBILITY REPORT INFORMATION	<p>Greg Allen-Pickett reported that World Mission's decision was to de-link Eliza Minasyan's salary structure from office costs so, in the future, when an office is leased, it will not impact the director's compensation. Moving her salary range up satisfied the proposal. The new structure can be effective July 1. The director will move July or August conditioned on finding housing, otherwise it will be deferred for one year. She has freedom to travel back to the region as needed for research.</p> <p>The Louisville office was fully archived in March with Cara Taylor, so fewer files will be transported to New York; everything will be electronically scanned and archived as well. The Howard Karaguesian office is at Park Avenue and 27th. Eliza met with the current director of Howard Karaguesian (former director of Armenian Fund USA in New York), Irina Lazarian. This is a great connection for government and other local Armenian philanthropists. Eliza can use their office and the conference space as needed, at least on a temporary basis, without cost. The</p>

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Jarvie Commonweal Service office in uptown on Riverside Drive is also available.

A lower cost allocation rate is under negotiations but will not be confirmed until October. Nevertheless, the costs of operating will increase, and it will take at least three years for funds development to recover the costs.

**FUNDS DEVELOPMENT
PROPOSAL
INFORMATION**

Jack Hodges distributed updated report and calendar. Discussion emphasized critical importance of local host committee coordination, the diverse, ecumenical nature of JMP, and a concrete program to highlight for focused giving. Discussion noted that Thanksgiving is Armenian Fund Telethon and considered budget impact, (i.e. what line item to pull resources from in advance of the event). While funds raised by this event should pay for itself, Eliza asserted that we need to prepare for extra expenses that would dip into our reserves to pay for this event and will not take from country budgets; we all have to agree to proactively and creatively commit the initial financial investment in order to grow support; donations need to be committed to the projects.

**ARMENIAN GENOCIDE
RECOGNITION OVERTURE
INFORMATION**

Christine Chakoian (Chicago Presbytery) and Vartkes Kassouni (Los Ranchos Presbytery) will be the overture advocates for item 11-07, the Armenian Genocide Centennial Commemoration overture, to the Peacemaking and International Issues committee at the 221st General Assembly in Detroit in June. Michael Haratunian will provide local ecumenical clergy contacts to invite to the committee. Cara Taylor will be present for first few days in committee. Greg Allen-Pickett will be available as the staff resource. This action would be significant because the current Turkish government has not acknowledged the crimes of its predecessor, and also because President Obama campaigned with a promise to assert the genocide, but politically, he has not mentioned "genocide" explicitly in office (although past presidents have). Those present expressed pride in reading the document and felt elevated as the rationale was presented on a human rights basis.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Jinishian Memorial Program United States Advisory Committee was set for October 9-10, 2014. The spring meeting was set for April 9-10, 2015, location to be determined.

**ADJOURN WITH
APPRECIATION AND
PRAYERS**

Vicki Gehrt expressed appreciation for each of the United States Advisory Committee members and Jinishian Memorial Program staff. Martin Lifer led the Committee in prayer. The United States Advisory Committee VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

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Respectfully Submitted,

Vicki Gehrt
Chair

Eliza Minasyan
Jinishian Memorial Program Coordinator/Executive Director

Cara Taylor
Recorder