

MOVING DIRECTOR

Introductory Comments

Purpose Statement: To pay the moving expenses of pastors and laypersons employed by the Conference from the Moving Expense Fund according to the rules of the Conference.

Accountability: The Conference Moving Director, an unpaid volunteer, is appointed by, and accountable to, the Cabinet. John E. Moffatt was appointed Moving Director starting January 1, 2001 and continues to serve.

Philosophy and Priorities: We use weight and packing allowances as incentives to keep moving costs low as possible. These limits are intended to promote sorting and discarding, and do-it-yourself packing as the normal practice. Our Conference policies minimize the burden on parishes and individual pastors to plan and coordinate the simultaneous and sequential moves needed to maintain itinerancy. Most moves are billed directly to the Conference, so neither local parishes nor pastors are required to pay large amounts on moving day.

Information

1. The Conference Moving Policy (Section 20.0.0 of the Conference Rules) describes our support of household moves for pastors and Conference staff. Important limitations and cautions are included (Sec. 20.2.3 ff.) to help them understand the extent and financial limits of the Moving Expense Fund. Our policy and current information are provided to persons who are moving. The Moving Director also advises those who request an alternate professional mover, support for a self-move, or have unusual circumstances.

2. Budget & Expenses. The Moving Expense Fund budget for 2006 was \$211,200, but there were fewer moves than expected. Only \$150,010 (just over 71%) had been paid out when the books were closed in January 2007. So, over \$60,000 of the apportionment allocated to the Conference Moving Fund became available to help offset the shortfall in 2006 apportionment income. The Moving Director receives all moving invoices and reimbursement requests. They are reviewed and note is made of “weight additives” or other charges prohibited by Conference rules (cited above), weight or packing charges above the Conference allowances, and any questionable entries. Once questionable items are clarified, vouchers are prepared and sent to the Conference Treasurer for payment. Although Graebel agreed to mail copies of its itemized billing estimates several years ago, during busy times they were often delayed. In 2005 Graebel shifted to electronic PDF files that are sent by email. Now the Moving Director is often able to spot errors and question expenses, and call a pastor’s attention to estimates of excess weight before the move. Based on the cost of our professional moves within the Conference during 2006, the excess weight charge-back rate for 2007 will be \$31.00 per CWT (31¢ per pound).

3. Moving Costs. In this table each appointed member of a clergy or staff couple is counted in the “No. Moved” and used to find the average. The total cost for each year includes the Moving Director Administration cost. Reimbursements to the Conference for excess weight and packing charges, mentioned in 2.(above) and shown in the following tables, often continue into the following year and are not included in this accounting. Although fuel costs continued to rise during most of 2006, Graebel Van Lines, Inc. continued to honor the a waiver of fuel surcharges for moves within Wisconsin that has been part of our agreement. However, because fuel surcharges do apply to interstate shipments, we have been obliged to pay them for our interstate moves. Based on US Department of Energy monthly reports of fuel price data, the surcharges for the nine (9) interstate moves we supported in 2006 ranged from 12% to 18% and added \$3903.96 to the total cost of our moves. [By comparison, in 2005 the total of such surcharges was \$400.] Data for the most recent five years are shown in this table.

Year	No. Moved	Avg. Move Cost	Total Cost
2002	75	\$ 2,800	\$ 201,243
2003	75	\$ 2,601	\$ 197,552
2004	81	\$ 2,595	\$ 210,183
2005	64	\$ 2,333	\$ 149,280
2006	56	\$ 2,666	\$ 149,322

4. Household Move Load Weights. The weight allowance for household goods and professional materials for a clergy household is 12,000 pounds; two-clergy households are allowed 15,000 pounds. In the following table the average weight for all moves and details on overweight loads for each of the past five years are shown. Before 2003 the charge-back rate was less than the average cost. In effect, apportionments then subsidized overweight loads.

		-----OVERWEIGHT-----			
Year	Avg. Weight	No.	Avg. Excess	Rate/Lb	Total Charge-Back
2002	9,643 Lbs.	12	2,230 Lbs	24¢	\$6,115.00
2003	9,430 Lbs.	17	3,093 Lbs	30¢	\$15,773.10
2004	10,071 Lbs	19	1,661 Lbs	29¢	\$ 9,150.08
2005	8,809 Lbs	9	1,507 Lbs	29¢	\$ 3,932.40
2006	9,337 Lbs	7	2,454 Lbs	29¢	\$4,115.87

5. Packing Materials and Labor Costs. Conference Moving Policy says a packing allowance of \$200 is available for each pastor. Hence, starting in 2004, it has been understood that two-clergy households have a total allowance of \$400. The average, number and total amount of excess and/or unauthorized (e.g. bulky item) packing costs for each of the past five years are shown in this table.

Year	Avg. Cost	No. Over Limit	Total Charge-Back
2002	\$110	10	\$1,036.23
2003	\$201	16	\$4,047.57
2004	\$112	11	\$912.59
2005	\$97	8	\$1,610.17
2006	\$178	5	\$1,753.93

6. Excess Weight & Packing Charge-backs. When the scale weight of a particular load of household goods (HHG) exceeds the Conference allowance, the unused portion of an individual's packing allowance may be applied to the excess-weight charge. Any remaining charge-back for excess weight and/or excess packing cost is billed to the person moved. The following data show the number of moves and the total charge-back billings greater than \$10 for each of the past five years.

Year	No.	Net charge-back Total Billings
2002	16	\$6,608.46
2003	23	\$20,473.73
2004	20	\$10,993.50
2005	9	\$ 4,930.66
2006	13	\$ 8,367.24

7. Administrative Cost. Pre-paid telephone cards are now used to assure a very low long distance cost. The great majority of communication with pastors, parish trustees, the Cabinet, and moving companies is done via the Internet. First class postage is used to mail invoices, reimbursement vouchers, the Moving Director's Evaluation survey, and occasional letters and documents. Expenses (for telephone cards, postage, printer cartridges, envelopes & paper, and travel to CF&A) submitted in 2006 by the Moving Director were \$44. The remaining value of pre-paid telephone cards, postage, stationery and printer cartridges on hand have not been tallied but are carried forward. The Chippewa-Heartland Regional office provided additional support in the form of occasional FAX service, legal size paper, and photocopying.

Highlights and Accomplishments

Transition Workshop: The 2006 Transition Workshop, led by Rev. Dr. Mark Fowler, Director of Field Education at GETS was held at Portage UMC. The daylong workshop is sponsored and arranged by the Cabinet. It covers personal, family, and professional concerns that arise when leaving one parish and entering another. The Moving Director is on hand to meet the folks who are moving and answer their questions. Although mechanical problems prevented the representatives from Graebel Moving & Storage in Wausau to attend, they have participated for many years and have agreed to do so in the future. They donate the time of one or two experienced drivers to provide advice, answer questions on moving, and demonstrate ways to pack various household items. In 2006, representatives from the Clergy Spouse Support Network joined the group over lunch in order to explain their developing work in the Conference.

Trial of Local Moves at an "Hourly Rate." Acting on suggestions and encouraged by two short-distance hourly rate moves authorized in 2004, the Moving Director and Graebel staff at Wausau agreed on a set of preliminary guidelines for hourly rate, same-day moves. In 2005 six moves fit the guidelines and were completed without problems. The trial was continued with eight additional moves during 2006 and it became apparent that the lack of scale weights made it impossible to apply current Conference moving rules fairly. In consultation with Graebel representatives at the close of the year, it was agreed that this type of service does not fit the rules for our regular moves. In the future, hourly rate moves will only be arranged as self-moves supervised by the Moving Director on an ad hoc basis.

Pastor's Moving Report and Moving Director's Survey: "Moving Reports" had been developed as a way to assure that persons we moved got information about their move. During 2006, Graebel improved the information letters sent to persons they move. Also, since the Moving Director's individual reports were largely based on Graebel's billing estimates and invoices, it was possible to provide needed information directly from them. However, those changes upset the survey because it was designed to accompany a report of moving data to each person moving. A revised method for providing information and obtaining evaluations will probably be instituted and tested with the 2006 cohort before Annual Conference. The process and results will be incorporated in the report for 2007.

Plans for the Coming Year

As noted above, a revision of information reporting and the collection of evaluations has immediate importance. Because of the importance of moves for our clergy, the Moving Director continues to meet with the Clergy Spouse Support Group (CSSN). In 2006, revision of the Moving Director's page on the Conference web site was deferred in favor of maintaining operation of the DS Move Request form for the Regional Offices. Improvements to the Moving Director web page will be attempted as Conference IT resources become available.

John E. Moffatt, Moving Director