



Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Joint Council
Saturday, Oct 12, 2024
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM EDT

In Attendance: Andrew Anderson, Kate Bregman, Deb Wood, Jean-Marie Barch, Meg Barney (Recording Clerk), Emily Blanck (Recording Clerk), Terry Christensen, Susan Claggett, Terry Cooke, Carleton Crispin, Chuck Devers, Sue Dietz, Christie Duncan-Tessmer (General Secretary), Jeanne Elberfeld (Administrative Council Clerk), Cecilia Filauro (Executive Administrator), Robert Greene, Kruskal Hewitt, Neil Holzman, John Marquette, Linell McCurry (CFO), Nikki Mosgrove, (Presiding Clerk), Michael Moulton, Debbie Murray-Sheppard, Carter Nash, F. Salvador Orellana (Deputy General Secretary), Kathryn Pettus, Nancy Robbins, George Schaefer (Nominating Council Clerk), Serita Spadoni, and Selden Smith
Regrets: Bethann Morgan, Jessy Schaffer, Ron Inskeep, Chloe Rosenthal, Cathy Toner, Tom Zemaitis (Treasurer)

I. Worship

Meeting for Worship for Attention to Business began with worship at 9:00 am.

II. Welcome

Quaker Life Council Clerk Jean-Marie Barch welcomed us to a new way of working together, to be more efficient and with more shared wisdom. Every few months, there will be opportunities to provide feedback. We should lean on one another as we move forward in this new experiment. We joyfully welcomed new people: Bethann Morgan and Jesse Schafer, who could not attend, Deb Wood, Kate Bregman, and Selden Smith who attended. And we now have two recording clerks, who will "read minutes into the face of the meeting" that will be approved during the meeting.

III. Meeting for Learning

☪ *Christie Duncan-Tessmer*

General Secretary Christie Duncan-Tessmer provided background to the Council about Friends Fiduciary Corporation (FFC or "Fiduciary"), the Quaker non-profit where the majority of PYM's funds are invested. Christie taught about how FFC investment services work. PYM has centuries of funds from PYM Quakers that have been invested, some are restricted for granting and programming, but others are unrestricted, used for our general fund and the annual budget. In both cases, we spend the income from the funds rather than the endowment. Most of PYM's funds are invested with FFC because they have strong performance, and they invest it with guidance of the Quaker testimonies. FFC are active owners and use their power as shareholders to press companies to change practices in line with our values and have made real change with this advocacy. The income we receive is a percentage of the value of the fund as an average over 3 years. We take the standard distribution of 4% every year. The Council discussed the funds that we control, the funds that other entities control, and our income.

IV. General Secretary Report

Christie Duncan-Tessmer

General Secretary Christie Duncan-Tessmer shared her report. In her oral report, she focused on using Staff Strategic Planning to de-silo the work of the staff, so that they can do their tasks and integrate their work with other staff. Each department has goals and plans for the projects that will get them to those goals. The projects are now being input to the project management tool, Asana, so they can all be aware of what needs to happen next by whom. She also reported on the new online tool, PYM Connect, to help people of the Yearly Meeting Connect. It is in alpha testing and will be shared at Continuing Sessions in the fall and be open to all in January. Christie did a brief presentation, sharing the Connect directory, the five communities of practice, and peer groups.

V. New Business

A. Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting Minute of LBGQTIA Solidarity

Nikki Mosgrove

Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting (PQM) shared their of LBGQTIA+ Solidarity with PYM governance. This minute will be read into the minutes at Fall Continuing Sessions. The Council members are encouraged to share this with their Quaker communities. In addition to receiving the minute, the council members should reflect on next steps and actions for individual Friends and/or PYM to take.

B. Church World Service Membership

Nikki Mosgrove

Clerk Nikki Mosgrove led the discussion about our long-standing relationship with Church World Service, [CWS]. CWS, a national "faith-based organization transforming communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster," has invited Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to increase our involvement and become a covenant member. CWS has changed the way they bring in members in and invited PYM. Being a covenant member, we would not be a voting member, but we could nominate to the board. We would be in relationship with the work done by CWS. CWS spun off National Council of Churches to carry their worldwide witness. The Council was reminded about the impressive work that the CWS accomplishes. **The Council has approved that PYM become a covenant member of CWS.** A review of this decision, its impact and our continued relationship will be on the agenda at a future sessions.

VI. Old Business

A. Essence of a meeting

Jeanne Elberfeld

Administrative Council Clerk, Jeanne Elberfeld, reminded us about the conversations that QLC, and to some extent Administrative and Joint Councils, have been discussing around "What is a Meeting?" She described a Friends Meeting in the many ways that it builds a strong bond and spiritual community of service, worship and action. She challenged us to consider what we want to do about the deep conversations around the essence of a meeting that the Councils have engaged in. There was rich discernment about this topic. **The Council referred the work to Ministry and Care. Ministry and Care is tasked to reflect this broader conversation about how being a meeting (or a member) has changed and consider effective ways to share the conversation with the PYM community.** We were reminded that in the future we may want to

discuss the way that Quarters work together.

B. September Council Retreat and Orientation

George Schaefer

Nominating Clerk George Schaefer opened a discussion of the retreat with a reminder that trust and active love are important. Accessibility is an important issue for us, including public transportation for the location, location of the screen and access to the materials from the day. Friends discussed creative solutions for the inevitable challenges to be available for everyone. The Council were grateful for the work of the organizers, the fellowship, blueberry syrup, and the work that was completed.

VII. Review and approve minutes

Meg Barney, Emily Blanck

Recording Clerks Emily Blanck and Meg Barney read the minutes. **The minutes were approved** with some minor improvements.

VIII. Ongoing Business

A. Nominating Council Report

George Schaefer

Nominating Council Clerk George Schaefer shared their report. Nominating Council met on Zoom two weeks ago and will have to periodically meet to do the discernment of Nominating Council. Nominating Council is very short on new members, with only 6 out of 13 Quarterly Meeting representatives after the next series of nominations at Fall Continuing Sessions. The report is attached. All council members are responsible for providing names for nominating.

B. PYM Fall Continuing Sessions

1. Invitation to Sessions

Nikki Mosgrove

Clerk Nikki Mosgrove invited all members to attend Continuing Sessions from November 8-10. Saturday, at Arch Street Meeting House, Nikki asked former presiding clerk, Melissa Rycroft will assist the clerk by clerking online. The meeting will be hybrid on Friday and Saturday and on Zoom on Sunday. On the agenda will be the Nominating report, advocacy and lobbying, and several other items. Business will be on Saturday and Sunday.

2. Prepare for Sessions Reports from Councils

Jeanne Elberfeld

Administrative Council Clerk Jeanne Elberfeld asked for Council members to share ideas in the chat or as an email about what should be included in the Councils' report(s).

3. Proposal for Memorial to the Lost sponsored by Heeding God's Call to End Gun Violence

Jean-Marie Barch

The Collaborative, Quakers Ending Gun Violence, sent a proposal to install a "Memorial to the Lost," on the grounds of Arch Street Meeting House during PYM's Fall Continuing Sessions. Council members shared their experiences with the memorial and its purpose. The Council is sensitive that the memorial might exacerbate trauma the for family members, while also seeing the purpose that the gun violence must stop. The Joint Council

is asking the Collaborative to do its due diligence. The Council will share their considerations and cautions with the Collaborative. If the Collaborative cannot have these considerations be done by Fall Continuing Sessions in November, then approval can extend to Spring Continuing sessions or at a future session if further time is needed to address these concerns. The Council has concerns and are clear that the organization must get permission from family members to share victims' names and that there be a pastoral care support plan in action while the memorial is up. **The Council approves that Quakers Ending Gun Violence install this memorial once they can address these concerns.** The Clerks group will assure that the concerns were addressed.

C. Committees

1. Arch Street Meeting House Preservation Trust (ASMHPT) nomination

☺ *George Schaefer*

Henry Bryans, Downingtown Meeting, was approved to be a member of the Arch Street Meeting House Preservation Trust.

2. Friends Fiduciary Board Appointment

Michael Homans, Radnor Meeting, has been appointed to the board of Friends Fiduciary.

3. Finance Committee - Election of distribution rate for funds invested with Friends Fiduciary

☺ *Kruskal Hewitt, Linell McCurry*

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires PYM's Council to adopt a calendar-year distribution rate each year for PYM funds held at Friends Fiduciary.

At its meeting on October 3, 2024, Finance Committee united to recommend that PYM accept Friends Fiduciary's standard distribution rate of 4% for 2025.

Council approved a 2025 distribution rate of 4% and including this language about the PYM distribution policy:

"It is, and has been, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's longstanding policy to seek a total return for the investment assets held by it and entrusted to it, whether the return is to be derived from capital appreciation, earnings, or distributions with respect to the capital or both. PYM has elected to, and intends to continue to be, governed by Section 5548(c) of the Pennsylvania Nonprofit Corporation Law in the determination of "income" from such assets."

4. Finance Committee - ASMHPT Shared Services Agreement, update for FY25

☺ *Kruskal Hewitt, Linell McCurry*

CFO Linell McCurry described the Shared Services Agreement, the Schedule A update for 2025, between Arch Street Meeting House Preservation Trust and PYM. The Shared Services Agreement is a legal document that guides how resources, staffing and administration is shared between PYM and ASMHPT. Linell shared way Schedule A changed for 2025 and noted that the partnership is going well.

5. Governance Advisory Committee - Term Limits Report

☺ *Neil Holzman*

Neil Holzman reported that the Governance Advisory Committee has discussed term limits for the Councils and affirmed the existing term limits of two three-year terms as adopted

by Admin Council. The Committee also recommended returning to the practice of appointing to staggered terms. Currently, staggered appointments have fallen out of use.

Each Council clerk is encouraged to discuss with their members to discuss how to stagger the terms on their council more evenly. This item needs to be included on a future agenda item. **The Council heard the report with approval for its recommendations.**

6. Program Committee - Report on QLC envelope funding

Sue Dietz

Sue Dietz of the Program Support Committee shared a report on funding for collaboratives. Council members are encouraged to contact Sue Dietz if they have questions about the envelope funding. Sue noted that collaboratives can develop requests throughout the year and don't have to just request funds from the Program Committee annually.

7. Program Committee - Term limits

Jean-Marie Barch

Sue Dietz, representing the Program Support Committee, has requested for an exception of term limits for one member because this member has important historical knowledge.

There is concern that we keep consistent on term limits. **The Council does not approve the exception.** If the person has specific expertise in a particular situation, the Program Committee is encouraged to consult with this person.

D. Sprints

1. Listening & Lobbying Sprint update

⌚ *Jeanne Elberfeld*

Administrative Council Clerk Jeanne Elberfeld has shared the new draft of the Listening and Lobbying Sprint report. The sprint will share their recommendations at the Fall Continuing Sessions. The resulting document will not be policy, but advices and guidance for the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, not to individuals or to Monthly and Quarterly meetings. Council Members are encouraged to share their comments on the document with Jeanne.

2. General Secretary Search Committee update

⌚ *Nikki Mosgrove*

Clerk Nikki Mosgrove shared that seven people have been identified for the General Secretary Search Committee. Demographically the group includes 4 from New Jersey, 3 are from Pennsylvania, 6 are under 60, 3 under 35, and 4 are Friends of Color.

IX. Noticings, concerns and joys from around the YM

⌚ *Jean-Marie Barch*

As a council member, if you become aware of joys, concerns or other noticing from around the yearly meeting, this will usually be a time to share these awarenesses. For this month, please share these items with Christie or Jean-Marie.

X. Recap Public Communication

⌚ *Jean-Marie Barch*

If there are particular items from our meeting today that should be communicated to the body through our newsletter, please share with Jean-Marie Barch by the end of the day Saturday.

We were reminded that our December meeting will be extended to hear from committees.

XI. Review and Approve Minutes

• *Emily Blanck, Meg Barney*

Recording Clerks Emily Blanck and Meg Barney read the minutes. The minutes were approved with some minor improvements.

XII. Closing Worship

Meeting for Worship for Attention to Business closed in worship at 12:55 pm.