

**Philadelphia Yearly Meeting**  
**Joint Council**  
**Saturday, December 14, 2024**  
**9:00 AM - 12:00 PM EDT**

**Attendees:** Christie Duncan-Tessmer (Staff, General Secretary), Jean-Marie Barch (Clerk, Quaker Life Council), Meg Barney (Recording Clerk), Emily Blanck (Recording Clerk), Terry Christensen, Susan Claggett, Terry Cooke, Chuck Devers, Sue Dietz, Jessy Eaby, Jeanne Elberfeld (Clerk, Administrative Council), Cecilia Filauro (Staff, Executive Administrator), Kruskal Hewitt, Linell McCurry (Staff, CFO), Sally McQuail (Recording Clerk), Bethann Morgan, Nikki Mosgrove (Presiding Clerk), Michael Moulton, Debbie Murray-Sheppard, Carter Nash, Salvador Orellana (Staff, Deputy General Secretary), Kathryn Pettus, Nancy Robbins, Chloe Rosenthal, George Schaefer (Clerk, Nominating Council), Serita Spadoni, Selden Smith (Rising Clerk), Cathy Toner, Terry Whiteford (Elder), Deb Wood, Tom Zemaitis (Treasurer)

**Regrets:** Andrew Anderson, Kate Bregman, Carleton Crispin, Robert Greene, Neil Holzman, Ron Inskeep, John Marquette

- I. **Meeting of the PYM Joint Council opened at 9:01 am with worship** - George Schaefer, clerk of Nominating Council, served as clerk.
  
- II. **Meeting for Learning: Types of PYM Groups** - Friends were asked to watch a short video in advance and were invited to briefly comment on highlights in the meeting. There were positive reports on the video, which described Governance Groups (appointed by PYM to meet a specific PYM need) and Community Groups (organized by individuals around common interests). We wondered what we could do with this video and whether it could be shared. The video could be made more accessible for visually impaired people by making the slides a dark background with white letters. PYM staff may put together a complete library of videos like this to provide as a resource for members. We could also link to this video in the governance handbook. Friends accepted the report.
  
- III. **General Secretary Report** - Christie Duncan-Tessmer shared highlights from her report. The written report is available. Christie highlighted that PYM has hired new staff very recently. CFO David Park, from Kennett Meeting, will start in February but will begin joining council and finance meetings now. In addition, Director of Program and Religious Life, Simone Small Gellizeau, an attender at Ujima meeting, and a new Director of

Development Joe Kirkenir, an attender at York Meeting, will join the staff. They are all active in Quaker Meetings and are “giddy” about joining the staff.

Christie shared one item that was not in the report. PYM has been involved with Unity Meeting. Unity Friends Meeting is a part of Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting and has had only one member that had been doing incredible work in the community. She passed away a couple of years ago. The meetinghouse and the assets are held in a trust at PNC Bank. Unity is under a care committee made up of Friends from the successor organizations as described in the trust document and Faith and Practice: Frankford Monthly Meeting, Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

Friends accepted the report.

IV. **New Business: Request from Western Quarter** - We received a minute from Western Quarter. They are seeking guidance on the legal and practical steps to lay down a meeting, including selling property. Western is separating the spiritual and financial pieces of this work of laying down a meeting. This relates to the property committee, a topic for later discussion in this Council Meeting, which has been dormant and shows why revitalizing the committee is relevant. The laying down of meetings is a rising concern throughout the Yearly Meeting. This highlights the needs of graveyards. The very small meetings also need Pastoral Care. We discussed creating a committee, perhaps including members of the Property Committee and Ministry and Care to craft a playbook to address these concerns. Friends accepted the report.

V. **Old Business: Climate Benchmark Status** - The climate benchmarks were approved on Sunday at Fall Continuing Sessions 2024. The PYM benchmarks are:

1. Measure the carbon footprint of Yearly Meeting operations, gatherings, and facilities.
2. Identify how the Yearly Meeting could be carbon net zero by 2030.
3. Invite monthly meetings to strive to reach 50% carbon reduction for members and Meetings.

The Request for Proposal(RFP) has gone out to hire someone to consult with us on the first steps to measure our carbon footprint. The RFP has been sent to seven organizations. The goal is to approve a contract by February. It is also important to consider how we are going to work individually and with Monthly Meetings to reach these goals, particularly the third benchmark. Reach out to F. Salvador Orellana if you would like to see the RFP, which will also be on PYM news soon. Friends received the report.

VI. **Ongoing Business: Nominating Council**

- i. *QM Minutes on Appointments to Nominating Council* - It is our policy to read into Council minutes from a Quarterly Meeting when a new member is appointed to the Nominating Council.

Deb Wood, of Westtown Monthly Meeting, Concord Quarter and Western Quarterly Meeting Coordinator, was appointed from Western Quarterly Meeting, and Jessy Eaby of Reading Monthly Meeting was appointed from Caln Quarterly Meeting.

- ii. *Council Role in Filling Nominating Committee Seats* - George shared queries for the council members to consider: What needs to happen for PYM members to come under the weight of their responsibility in service to the YM? How do we make such service not only something Friends are willing to do and actually see as part of their faith practice?

George pointed out that only six of thirteen Quarters are represented, and these Council members are important to our connection with all of the Quarters. We had a rich discussion about the many challenges and opportunities of nominating people for the Yearly Meeting. Someone has highlighted that there is a lack of trust in PYM and it may be helpful for Pastoral Care to help people reconnect with the Yearly Meeting. Other Quarters are unclear on the process on how or what kind of person to appoint. Some don't understand why they should serve. The Yearly Meeting still needs to improve how we communicate the purpose of PYM and recognize and value the gifts of our members. PYM needs to directly reach out to Quarterly Meetings and also to Monthly Meetings. Our small meetings have little time to be involved in the Yearly Meeting. If we think of PYM as an interconnected part of the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, not a separate entity, then work for PYM may be perceived as work for the local meetings. Friends accepted the report.

- VII. **Ongoing Business: Sessions Theme** - Sessions has one theme that is used for Spring Continuing Sessions, Annual Sessions, and Fall Continuing Sessions. The proposed theme for the calendar year 2025 is "Members One of Another." This theme reflects our need to build trust and reconnect with each other. **The Councils approved this theme: Members One of Another.** If you have ideas about keynotes, speakers or panels, please share them with one of the clerks. A Friend suggested Tom Gates, from Lancaster Monthly Meeting, since he wrote a pamphlet with this title. Friends accepted the report.

VIII. **Ongoing Business: Committees**

- i. *General Secretary Search Committee* - Nikki Mosgrove updated the Councils. She noted that Annual Sessions will be meeting at Cheney University next summer. She reminded the council that the young and diverse members of the General Secretary Search Committee were announced in the Fall Continuing Sessions. They have met and will meet twice a month. They are updating the job description and will use a search firm. Friends accepted the report to date.
- ii. *Program Support Committee* - The Program Support Committee has delegated authority to distribute the funds allocated for use of collaboratives under the care of QLC. They have not budgeted all of their funds so they have some funds to provide as needs arise. In addition, the committee is seeking more members. Friends approved the acceptance of the report.
- iii. *Ministry & Care Committee* - The Ministry and Care committee has been looking at the Spiritual State of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. They have found that there is a great need for pastoral care, and the Yearly Meeting resources are not being effectively received. They will be working on creating a Pastoral Care Toolkit. Friends approved the acceptance of the report.
- iv. *Property Committee* - We discussed that we have a need to revive this committee. There are resources already available from Friends Fiduciary and Partners for Sacred Places to provide for some of the needs that have arisen, as well as Resource Friends. Friends agreed with the Clerk's suggestion that it be called a Property Advisory Committee. It is important to consider the spiritual and information-sharing dimensions of property. Monthly Meetings own their own property. **The Councils have approved that the Property Committee be revived and will share the updated charge with the Councils in January.**

IX. **Review and Approval of Minutes - The minutes were read and approved with minor changes.**

X. **Ongoing Business: Sprints**

- i. *Listen & Lobby Sprint Status Report* - The Listening and Lobbying sprint is nearing completion of its work. Jeanne shared this document, as they have come to unity on it for PYM groups use only. Please email thoughts or concerns to Jeanne. The Clerk commended the process and their continuing work. The draft of this Sprint will be

considered for approval in March. This will be circulated before March continuing sessions. Friends accepted the report.

- ii. *Sprint Status Report* - This sprint has completed drafting the survey. They will present Friends with a survey and, based on the resulting information, consider what is important to include in our Sessions going forward. Friends were supportive of the plans for this survey to proceed.
  - iii. *Revision of the Governance Handbook Sprint Status Report* - Christie presented a brief status report. The General Secretary has been charged by the Governance Advisory Committee to redraft the handbook for their consideration based on Joint Council direction and approved documents. It will hopefully come to Council for review in January. The Clerk said that Faith and Practice does not include information on governance. The Administrative Council approved the Sprint last year. The staff will be assisting in preparing this document. Friends were supportive of the plans to go forward.
  - iv. *Indigenous Lands Visual Representation Sprint Status Report* - This was started under QLC as the next step after the land acknowledgment. The land acknowledgement asks “Do you know the history of the lands on which your land sits?” This second sprint will work on a resource to help answer that question. It is difficult to discern which tribe historically stewarded the land.
- XI. **News from around the YM: Noticings, concerns, and joys from around the YM** - Friends who have visited meetings or attended YM events are invited to share noticings, concerns, and joys regarding how Spirit is moving through the body. George also served as a resource friend. It seems that we are having new and younger members join our meetings, often with concerns about war. Be aware of how to respond to these new Friends.

Tom Zemaitis attended The Meetinghouse by Candlelight gathering at Arch Street which featured performances by Friends Schools. Seldon Smith from State College Meeting reported that they are considering creating a wildflower meadow as they celebrate the centennial of the Meetinghouse. Chris Stern from Middletown Meeting presented ‘Who turned on the light?’ A play about how George Fox might react to current questions. Nikki Mosgrove said that during Patriot Week, Trenton Meeting will present a Quaker's view during wartime. Meg Barney shared visiting with a small group of Friends from Woodbury Meeting, and they are developing a relationship. She encourages making

Friends with other Meetings. George Schaefer attended the thread gathering on grief. It was a wonderful day, rich with resources. Staff member Tara Rubenstein did a wonderful job coordinating the event. Susan lifted up the opportunities for families at Monthly Meetings to participate in community events. At the holiday parade, Third Haven Meeting had a float. Abington Meeting changed the name of the RE committee to the Family Programming Committee.

- XII. **Recap Public Communication** - The minutes will be posted and shared publicly on PYM's website. Additionally, one item from the day's work will be highlighted. The minutes will be published on Thursday, December 19, 2024. What shall we lift up for this communication? The Lobbying Sprint report will be highlighted. The document will be attached. Friends approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sally McQuail, Recording Clerk  
Emily Blanck, Recording Clerk  
Meg Barney, Recording Clerk