

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Joint Council
Saturday, January 11, 2025
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM EDT

Attendees: Jean-Marie Barch (Clerk, Quaker Life Council), Meg Barney (Recording Clerk), Emily Blanck (Recording Clerk), Kate Bregman, Terry Christensen, Susan Claggett, Carleton Crispin, Terry Cooke, Chuck Devers, Christie Duncan-Tessmer (Staff, General Secretary), Sue Dietz, Jessy Eaby, Jeanne Elberfeld (Clerk, Administrative Council), Cecilia Filauro (Staff, Executive Administrator, Robert Greene, Yelena Forrester (Elder), Kruskal Hewitt, John Marquette, Linell McCurry (Staff, CFO), Bethann Morgan, Nikki Mosgrove (Presiding Clerk), Debbie Murray-Sheppard, Salvador Orellana (Staff, Deputy General Secretary), Nancy Robbins, Chloe Rosenthal, George Schaefer (Clerk, Nominating Council), Serita Spadoni, Selden Smith (Rising Clerk), Cathy Toner, Deb Wood, Tom Zemaitis (Treasurer), Suzy Kennedy (Recording Clerk), David Park (Staff, Incoming CFO), John Marquette

Regrets: Andrew Anderson, Neil Holzman, Ron Inskeep, Michael Moulton, Carter Nash, and Kathryn Pettus.

- I. **Worship and Welcome** - Jeanne Elberfeld invited Friends to enter into worship at 9:02 am. Friends in the room introduced themselves. Jeanne welcomed David Park who will be serving as the new CFO in February. Jeanne invited Friends to offer comments about the PYM video that provides the 'big picture' of the Yearly Meeting. Friends shared positive comments about the video and noticed that it helps Friends to understand how the structure of PYM works in community.
- II. **Meeting for Learning** - Christie Duncan-Tessmer offered clarity on how the 'Bridge Contacts' work to connect Friends on topics important to Friends. Christie is willing to visit monthly meetings at any time to support this work. Christie asked folks to provide feedback on how the video can be used and how to best move forward. She appreciates the energy that Friends are bringing forward to have the video be available to meetings in the near future. Friends are ready for the 'Connecting' to begin. Friends asked that the closed captions be corrected for content and placement on the slide as sometimes the caption blocked out an image. Friends are encouraged to invite Friends from their meetings to be involved. Possible edits to the video could increase accessibility for

viewers. The video could also be posted on social media sites for a wider audience.

III. **General Secretary Report** - Christie Duncan-Tessmer reviewed her report, lifting up the fact that the current Community Engagement Coordinator is coming under the weight of shouldering more tasks. Christie noted that a second coordinator will be coming on board to work with individuals; Claire Kimmel, the current coordinator, will work with connecting meetings. The position is being funded by two families and foundation monies. A matching fund will be set up for each contributor who increases their monthly recurring gift by at least \$15 for a minimum of two years, a match of \$1,000 will be made up to \$60,000. Christie said this campaign will begin soon. Christie also reported that staff is now aligning their work with the PYM strategic directions and goals and “EDQ” - Every Day Quaker - activities. Yet, building and strengthening relationships should and will be maintained and sustained. Salvador Orellana reported the staff is aligning their work with the strategic directions and goals and PYM Leadership team and staff are using Asana, a project management tool, to help track and realign their work regularly, based on how they are making progress on the goals. Friends accepted the report with gratitude.

IV. **Old Business**

- i. *Climate Benchmark Status* - Salvador Orellana shared his report and lifted up that the RFP for the Net Zero Consultant has gone out. So far, one application has been submitted. Councils are responsible for the first two of the climate benchmarks that were approved. The third benchmark is an invitation for each monthly meeting to measure and reduce their current carbon footprint. There are several software tools and applications that can help meetings measure this. Some meetings have already begun to submit their reports. Climate Justice Stewards are providing vision and accountability. Quaker Earthcare Witness and the Eco-Justice Collaborative have resources to offer and can be a resource to assist meetings in this work. Friends considered the balance between maintaining historical buildings and supporting environmental stewardship and will also use terms that engage all folks in the work. Nikki noted the passion that Friends bring to this work and looks forward to working with Friends. Salvador shared that the PYM website has resources located in the Climate Justice section.

V. **Ongoing Business**

- i. *Nominating Council* - George Schaefer shared the concepts of *staggered terms* and *bringing folks on board in cohorts* can provide support for each other.

Friends were asked to share their thoughts on either or both ways of working. Governance Advisory Committee recommended to the Councils that a staggered approach to council member terms be re-introduced. Joint Council members will discuss the possibilities. Nominating will further season and make a recommendation. Nominating Council has the responsibility for the orientation of persons new to councils. Friends shared thoughts on how to fill unexpired terms, and how to address ongoing vacancies. Jeanne thanked Friends for their thoughts. This work will move forward.

- ii. *Sessions* - Nikki Mosgrove shared the Theme 2025 “Members One of Another”. Spring Sessions will be held March 8th & 9th with business meeting held at Arch Street using a hybrid format. Annual Sessions will be held at Cheyney University. Bayard Rustin was an alum of Cheyney.
- iii. Review and Approval of Minutes **Friends approved with minor edits.** *Meg Barney, Emily Blanck, Susan Kennedy*

Committees and Sprints

- iv. *General Secretary Search Committee* - Tom Zemaitis reported the committee has almost retained a search consultant. A draft of the job description was recently updated. The Personnel Committee has responded to the work thus far in discussion with the search committee. Future steps will include finalizing the document and bringing it to Councils for final approval. Jeanne invited Friends to respond to the current draft. Friends appreciated the good work that has gone into the draft to this point. Friends recommended adding that there be a willingness to travel and have strong interpersonal skills. Friends entered into rich discernment regarding to whom the General Secretary would report. The current Joint Council model is a recent practice. Friends considered if the Quaker Life Council and Administrative Council could be the two entities to fill this role. **Friends approved that reporting bodies be the Quaker Life Council and Administrative Council..** This topic will return to the February Joint Council meeting.
- v. *Finance Committee* - Tom Zemaitis provided the report. A revised charge of the audit committee is proposed for councils' approval. The former charge was not in line with our practice and finding persons to serve on the committee had been difficult, so the charge is being revised. Fred Melroy contributed to the document.. The charge is limited to the audit only. The outside auditors that

currently serve PYM recommend the audit committee be comprised of the Finance Committee members along with the Treasurer of the Arch Street Meeting House Preservation Trust. **Friends approved the recommendation as brought forward.**

- vi. *Property Advisory Committee* - Jean-Marie Barch shared a redrafted charge and asked for feedback from the Councils and whether it reflected our discussion last month regarding the need to balance the spiritual with the practical. **Friends approved the redrafted charge.** The next steps will be to populate this new committee with Friends willing to serve.
- vii. *Granting Committee* - Jeanne Elberfeld shared the Granting Committee handbook that guides their work. The handbook was revised to provide more space for granting groups to conduct their work. Jeanne noted the Granting Committee has excellent support from PYM staff. **Friends approved the revised handbook.**
- viii. *Program Support Committee* - Jean-Marie Barch shared changes to the charge of the Program Support Committee. Quaker Life Council had approved the name change last year to be the Program Support Committee. Jean-Marie asked Friends to notice the difference between the earlier charge and the proposed charge as they consider the responsibilities of the committee. The new charge shifts to ways to support and encourage collaboration in community rather than an overarching 'oversight' committee. The new charge holds more of a pastoral tone. Accountability is still present throughout the nature of the work. Jean-Marie shared there is still a need for reciprocal responsibility for the work to be held. Friends were asked for their thoughts on this. Friends felt that authority along with care and concern are needed to guide the work. The term "shepherding" was lifted up as a possible reference. It was noted that the Program Support Committee works closely with collaboratives, sprints, etc., as they use the funding provided to them. Possibly re-sorting the duties listed to amplify the work they do would provide clarity for the scope and depth of the work. Jeanne asked if Friends were in support of returning this document to the Program Support Committee for further adjustments with gratitude for the hard work. It will return to this council at a future date.
- ix. *Listening & Lobbying Sprint* - Jeanne Elberfeld shared an update on the Listening and Lobbying Sprint. They have circulated the draft guidance and have set up four sharing and listening sessions in preparation for Continuing Sessions. The

four sessions are scheduled for late January and early February by Zoom and will be advertised through PYM postings. We will ask collaboratives to discuss the guidance for real-time examples. Jean-Marie asked Friends to acknowledge the extensive work that this sprint has done to move an extraordinary distance from a place of discord to a place of unity.

VI. News from around the YM: Noticings, concerns and joys - *Jeanne Elberfeld* asked 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. There were so many joyous sharings. Marion Meeting was lifted up as having a new heating system as well as holding members' concerns about world events. Christie feels like during the last six months, members are reporting back that more people are showing up and reportedly struggling Meetings are beginning to revitalize. Haverford Meeting has seen an increase in college-age attenders. Debbie Murray-Sheppard reported that in her Quarter there is an increased number of young families seeking a place where their children would be valued. There is more commitment to the meeting in doing things better for everyone in the community. Trenton Monthly Meeting disbursed \$100,000 to grassroots organizations and small businesses in their area from 2019 to 2022 (80% went to initiatives led by people of color). They are now committing to invest an additional \$100,000 from now until the money is expended to grassroots organizations or businesses led people of color in Trenton. Abington Quarter has a new clerk. Nancy Robbins noted that in Southern Quarter, there is a growth of spirit but not of people. There is a concern about their organizational health, and they would love assistance from the Yearly Meeting.

VII. Review of the Joint Council Experiment - The councils have met three times in this new format, including January's meeting. We reflected on the experience so far. Jeanne asked Friends for their feedback on how our 'tri-council' model is going. Friends shared that this model provides a more comprehensive view of how everything works together. Friends shared a concern that the meeting structure is long, three hours. The work of councils can be more effective and efficient with greater depth when each report has the input of Friends from all the councils. Jeanne noted the support of Elders in today's meeting and the approval of minutes in the 'face of the meeting' contributed to a positive experience. A few friends commented that the combined efforts of the Joint Council resulted in a richer result. *It was noted* that the various clerk reports were presented with careful attention to time and schedule commitments. Having reports approved in one Joint Council meeting is acknowledged to be more effective than having separate councils each look at reports in separate consecutive months. It is

important to have short breaks regularly, perhaps approximately every 50 minutes or so. Also, the microphone system still needs improvement for the hybrid experience. Friends recognized and thanked Jeanne for her excellent clerking of today's meeting.

VIII. **Review and Approval of Minutes - Friends approved the minutes** with minor adjustments. *Meg Barney, Emily Blanck, and Susan Kennedy, Recording Clerks*

IX. **Recap Public Communication** - Friends asked that the topic of how the Joint Council model is working with the addition of reading and approving the minutes in the 'face in the meeting' be lifted up. **Friends approved.**