

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Joint Council
Saturday, February 8, 2025
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM EDT

In Attendance: Andrew Anderson, Jean-Marie Prestwidge Barch (Clerk, Quaker Life Council), Meg Barney (Recording Clerk), Kate Bregman, Terry Christensen, Susan Claggett, Sean Connolly (Executive Director, Arch Street Meeting House Preservation Trust), Terry Cooke, Carleton Crispin, Chuck Devers, Sue Dietz, Christie Duncan-Tessmer (Staff, General Secretary), Jeanne Elberfeld (Clerk, Administrative Council), Robert Greene, Kruskal Hewitt, John Marquette, Linell McCurry (Staff, CFO), Sally McQuail (Recording Clerk), Bethann Morgan, Nikki Mosgrove (Presiding Clerk), Michael Moulton, Debbie Murray-Sheppard, Lisa Ogletree, Salvador Orellana (Staff, Deputy General Secretary), David Park (Staff, Incoming CFO), Kathryn Pettus, Nancy Robbins, Chloe Rosenthal, George Schaefer (Clerk, Nominating Council), Selden Smith (Rising Clerk), Serita Spadoni, Cathy Toner, Deb Wood

Regrets: Emily Blanck (Recording Clerk), Jessy Eaby, Cecilia Filauro (Staff, Executive Administrator), Neil Holzman, Ron Inskeep, Suzy Kennedy (Recording Clerk), Carter Nash, Tom Zemaitis (Treasurer)

- I. **Worship and Welcome** - Jean-Marie Barch invited Friends to enter into worship at 9:03 a.m.

- II. **Arch Street Meeting House Preservation Trust (ASMHPT)** - Jeanne Elberfeld guided Friends in reviewing the ASMHPT FY23-24 Annual Report. Administrative Council appoints members to serve on the Board of Trustees. David Unkovic is the rising clerk. Clerk Lisa Ogletree presented highlights of the members of the Board and their work. The Board of Trustees includes non-Quakers and members from other meetings to serve on the Board. Sean Connolly offered highlights from the Annual Report and emphasized the value of the ASMHPT and its outreach to the wider community, including those who come to visit Arch Street. Almost 60,000 visitors came to Arch Street during a ten month period last year. ASMHPT hosted many events throughout the year. ASMHPT has been able to increase its support of the operational costs for Arch Street. There has been no need to use the bridge funding that PYM has offered for the capital campaign. Lighting and fire suppression initiatives are underway to protect the historic building. The HVAC upgrades are continuing. Everyone is invited to come to Arch Street on Thursday, April

10th for the unveiling of the new exhibits. Friends were interested in how the ASMHPT was navigating the complexities of recognizing the role that Quakers held in the history of the country. In preparation for the sesquicentennial, July 4th, 2026, ASMHPT is creating new first person dramatizations for the event. Various initiatives are underway to lift up the rich history of Friends that could be told. Friends accepted the report with gratitude.

- III. **Meeting for Learning** - Jean-Marie Prestwidge-Barch invited Friends to reflect upon a 2-page document written by Francisco Burgos, Executive Director of Pendle Hill, entitled Seven Pieces of Advice for the Current Moment. George reflected upon the discomfort that some may hold when considering the role of accountability. A healthy relationship has a mutual exchange of roles. The council was invited to respond to the query: What is there for us (PYM Quakers) to understand about the accountability and relationships we share? Jeanne Elberfield stressed that we support each other. Jean-Marie led us into silent reflection. Friends settled into a time of rich sharing. The mutuality of carrying work together is a topic that Jean-Marie said will come back to the Council in our work together. Francisco Burgos' writing included, "In times of crisis, trusting and relying on each other is essential..." Friends may find that this time period is an opportunity for Friends to be actively engaged.
- IV. **General Secretary Report** - Christie Duncan-Tessmer turned Friends attention to a guiding document, Opportunities and Needs Related to the Lawsuit, for considering the work related to the lawsuit. Being grounded in Spirit is imperative at this time. The document will be adjusted and prepared for use in monthly meetings. Additionally, documents are being drafted with guidelines for meetings to know how best to respond when situations arise. Documents will continue to be refined to provide support and website links to resources for meetings. PYM Connect is underway. PYM is launching a matching program for donations. The topic of 'sanctuary' is beginning to be lifted up in PYM. Friends were concerned that Church World Services, which does extensive work with immigrants and refugees and where PYM is a Covenant Member, just lost two-thirds of their staff due to the current national situation. Transitions in PYM staffing are taking place with attention to positive growth and holding stability and support to balance the changes. Roles held within PYM staff are being made more transparent to inform future staff positions with institutional knowledge. The Strategic Plan will continue to be highlighted for Friends.

V. **New Business – Lawsuit**

- i. Christie Duncan-Tessmer guided Friends in reviewing the Lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security. Friends were updated on the lawsuit, its status, and the impact on PYM. The lawyers of Democracy Forward are active with several initiatives. NY Yearly Meeting has joined the plaintiffs. Another case is being filed through two centers – at Georgetown University. PYM has connected with its own immigration lawyer. We are getting many letters of support from other meetings within PYM and across the country. Friends are asked to consider what they can do in their own meeting.

Stretch! Friends took a few minutes to stretch before returning to the work.

VI. Old Business - Climate Benchmark Status

- i. Climate Benchmark Status - F. Salvador Orellana will share an update on the RFP process to identify an organization to measure the carbon footprint of our operations. Five proposals have been received, four are being considered. They have been shared with people with experience that can help to discern which to select. They hope to have a response ready in a couple of weeks before Sessions on March 8th.

VII. Ongoing Business

- i. Nominating Council - George Schaefer brought forward from the Nominating Council a DRAFT policy regarding terms of service for Joint Council Members. The DRAFT policy recommends staggering terms by adding or reducing a year. The membership for each of the three Councils is fewer than the range recommended. A Friend was concerned about the enforcement of the proposal. Another suggested that we separate policy from implementation. Jean-Marie spoke about the need to neither over nor under proscribe the guidelines for terms. Jean-Marie suggests that perhaps a Sprint would be appropriate to address this issue, composed of members of Admin. Council, Quaker Life Council, and Nominating Council. Friends were in unity for this approach.
- ii. Sessions
 - a. Continuing Sessions agenda conversation - Nikki Mosgrove is preparing the agenda for Spring Continuing Sessions and asks Friends to consider how Friends and meetings can be safe spaces for those most impacted by recent changes in the United States. There will be hybrid locations at: Lehigh Valley, London Grove, Mount Holly, and State College. When we meet for Sessions, we are gathered together in the Light while we

also address the decisions that need to be made. We are called to share our light with the world. How can we be a 'sanctuary'? What would it look like for your meeting?

- b. Summer Sessions Program Planning - Planning is underway for Sessions to take place at Cheyney University. Nikki shared that Sessions will seek to provide support and guidance for Friends in the age group of 'Second Thirds' (ages approximately 36 to 59).

Question: Are there any recommendations for keynote speakers for Summer Sessions? Please send a note with their contact information to Nikki. Please encourage your meeting to fill out the survey for sessions.

- iii. Stretch and Approve Minutes - After minor adjustments, Friends approved the minutes to this point.

- iv. Committees

- a. Program Support Committee - Jean-Marie shared the REVISED charge for the Program Support Committee. Friends were asked if they accepted this new charge over the next period of time. Friends approved.
- b. Ministry & Care Committee - Jean-Marie shared the Ministry & Care Committee requests clarity for how to offer financial support for At Large members, who are members of PYM directly. The committee presented a policy for consideration for approval. After much discussion, Friends approved the policy. An At Large Member has requested funds to attend a conference. Membership & Care had approved the request and is bringing this to the Joint Council now for its approval, according to the new policy. -A Friend questioned if it was necessary that a financial request of an At Large member should seek support through the Joint Council. Friends approved the QLC money to support the At Large member request, with the awareness that the financial needs of At Large members are a concern under our care.
- c. Governance Advisory Committee (Decide, Discuss) - Jeanne shared the Governance Advisory Committee is recommending changes to the revised structure and organization of the governance handbook. Some

of the comments were about the structure of the document and some were related to the governance responsibilities which were approved by the body in session in 2014. . For example, a definition of ‘community groups’ is needed and approval of the additional responsibility that QLC is responsible for community groups and so is responsible for their health . Changes will be seasoned by Governance AdCom, then come back to this body .Friends approved the changes. Jeanne Elberfeld will request the definition of ‘community groups be added to the handbook. Friends are invited to send any additional adjustments to Jeanne.

- d. Members of Committees (Decide) - George Schaeffer, clerk of Nominating Committee, brought forward three names for the Property Advisory Committee. They are John Marquette, Hank Hallowell, and Bianca Aniski. Friends approved. The name of Susan Claggett was brought forward to serve on Ministry & Care Committee. Friends approved.
- e. General Secretary Search Committee (Decide) - Nikki stated the search committee has been working on the job description which had not been updated for years. Friends approved the revised job description.

v. Sprints

- a. Listening & Lobbying - Jeanne reported the Listening & Lobbying Sprint has been meeting for almost a year. During the past few weeks, four on-line Sessions were held for Friends to review a DRAFT of the Guidance on Advocacy and Lobbying. Approximately 50 Friends total attended the listening sessions. Council members are aware that some Friends are opposed to lobbying. Friends also know that PYM Friends hold a diversity of views. Some definitions were questioned. Friends were invited to be mindful of knowing when you are speaking for yourself and when you are speaking for your Meeting. The DRAFT Guidance will be brought forward for approval at Spring Continuing Sessions on March 8th.

VIII. Joys & Concerns from around the YM - Abington Meeting held its second Benjamin Lay event where an engaging representative from N’COBRA spoke on Reparations work in Philadelphia. An online Friend noted the audio today was greatly improved and online

PDF documents were very accessible. A Friend shared that we should be mindful of the emotions evoked in Friends in the current national moment. A Friend is grateful for the chance to be together. A Friend is amazed and joyful for the group that brought the lawsuit in such a timely fashion. Another shared a joy and a concern: The joy is being part of PYM. The concern is for an undocumented friend and his family who may need help if he is deported. A YAF participant reports that the group is growing and the fellowship is very meaningful.

- IX. **Approve Minutes** - Friends approved the minutes with minor adjustments. Meg Barney and Sally McQuail, Recording Clerks

- X. **Recap Public Communication.** Each month we publish an article. What should be our topic this week? Friends were in unity to highlight the job description for the search for our next General Secretary.