



**Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Quaker Life Council  
Minutes  
November 18, 2023**

Present for the online meeting were: Jean-Marie Prestwidge-Barch (Clerk QLC), Meg Barney (acting Recording Clerk), Susan Claggett, Sue Dietz, Christie Duncan-Tessmer (PYM General Secretary), Cecilia Filauro (PYM Executive Administrator), Robert Greene, Guinevere Janes, Rose Ketterer, Linell McCurry (PYM CFO), Salvador Orellana (PYM Deputy General Secretary), Kathryn Pettus, and George Schaefer. Absent: Emily Blanck (Recording Clerk), Michael Moulton, Nikki Mosgrove (Rising Clerk), Melissa Rycroft (Presiding Clerk), Debbie Murray-Sheppard, Wade Wright.

1. Worship & Welcome

The meeting opened in silent worship at 11:35 AM.

2. Review of Joint Council session

The review of the Joint Council session included discussion of the feedback and input that was received from Friends to the two PYM documents: The PYM Directions-looking ahead worksheets.pdf and the Continuing Sessions Implementation Path 2023 11 14.pdf. Further discernment will take place in relation to this work.

3. Review & approval of minutes

- *The Council approved the October 21, 2023, Draft Minutes of the Quaker Life Council Meeting with one adjustment. It was noted that George Schaefer and Meg Barney were not present for the discussion due to serving as at-large members to the Nominating Council's concurrent meeting.*

The Council expressed gratitude to Emily for the minutes.

4. Review Committee Appointments

QLC reviewed the spreadsheet for PYM Councils, Committees and Collaboratives (Revision 11/16/2023). It was noted there are several vacancies on various committees. The clerk of QLC asked Friends to consider these vacancies. Friends were encouraged to reach out to Friends throughout PYM to ask if they are willing to serve. A Friend asked if it is a conflict of interest to have a PYM Member-at-large serve on the Ministry & Care Committee. QLC will consider this. Another Friend offered to serve on the Sessions Coordinating Committee. Another Friend asked if members of the QLC can volunteer and be placed on the committees. The clerk responded that committees under the care of QLC are QLC's to populate. The clerk

shared that QLC can support committees when issues are raised in the Spiritual State of the Meeting Reports.

##### 5. Committee Reporting Schedule and Template

QLC considered a planned approach for hearing from committees. Three documents were reviewed: a DRAFT QLC Committee Reporting Schedule, a Committee Report Template, and a Committee Report Template ABRIDGED DRAFT. The QLC clerk asked if the revised schedule spoke to the needs of QLC to do the stewardship we are to do for the work that is under our care.

Rich discussion emerged. A Friend asked how to hold both the abridged template and a full report and wondered if the schedule could be adjusted if a committee needed more time to present its information.

A Friend noted that the Program Committee has been reporting every month to QLC, yet the new revised schedule does not show this. In addition, the new template questions do not always seem to apply to the work of the Program Committee. Friends agreed the reports of the Program Committee clerk have been well received and brought clarity about the use of funds. The Program Committee is encouraged to maintain a monthly accounting of how groups and collaboratives spend money. In the new schedule, the Program Committee would report at least three times per year or more. The PYM General Secretary noted that the Program Committee report is functional since it outlines the “big picture.” Within that context, perhaps smaller reports could be submitted each month, with the broader view to be presented in person three times a year.

The QLC clerk shared that the new template asks groups to state how their work matches the witnesses from the PYM.

A Friend asked about the reporting schedule for Climate Witness Stewards, who have a specific yet limited charge to report on what is being accomplished with PYM’s Climate Witness. The Climate Witness Stewards have no budget and report to the Yearly Meeting in session once a year. The QLC clerk noted that the Climate Witness Stewards are under the care of Administrative Council.

A Friend asked if Collaboratives should be on the schedule, a question that was not fully resolved.

A Friend noted the Program Committee reports only go to QLC and asked if the reports are useful.

The QLC clerk noted that having details and reports of how monies were spent is essential.

A Friend noted the new schedule might not serve a committee’s needs. How would QLC live/lean into that discussion? The QLC clerk shared that perhaps information could be sent to the committees that would provide helpful context for the committee clerks, explaining the changes to the schedule along with why they were being made, and ask for responses.

It was noted the new schedule had already been partially shared with committees. A Friend encouraged QLC to use the new schedule, gather feedback, and let the committees share if the schedule and the template work. Due to many participants still having questions

about using either the abridged form or the longer form, the QLC clerk recommended using the forms for half a year to see what meets the needs of committees and committee clerks.

The QLC clerk reminded Friends that the Admin. Council also receives reports. There is a working relationship between Admin. Council and QLC that sometimes results in overlaps. QLC Friends were asked to hold this relationship tenderly.

## 6. Committee Reports

A. Ministry & Care: The QLC received the November 2023 Ministry & Care report. Friends were asked to consider how we can most effectively evoke understanding of the Spiritual State of the Meetings that can be bridged to each other. Is it the work of QLC to help do this 'bridging'? If yes, how do we best do this work? Are there ways for QLC to offer support to meetings? It was noted that if a report is not clear, then the work to assist a meeting might not be as effective as it could be. At the request of a Friend, the name of the report's author will be added. A Friend shared that meetings are to follow the Spirit when responding, and in doing so, might approach the report with creativity. If a report was unclear, perhaps the questions being asked of meetings were not clear to them or were not the questions they wished to answer. The reports provide a sense of the trends to be found among meetings, providing feedback for councils. The QLC clerk noted that if the Spiritual State of the Meeting reports are not read for feedback, the reports will be wasted effort.

1. The General Secretary shared that the Ministry & Care report says the committee is unsure of next steps and is open to QLC input. This request aligns with other committees asking for guidance and support from QLC. A Friend asked if the work of the Council/the Destinations fit into the questions the meetings are being asked about their spiritual growth. Ministry & Care will work to frame the questions for this year's Spiritual State of the Meeting reports. The QLC clerk shared that if QLC members have ideas about how to frame this year's questions, they are to send them to Ministry & Care. A Friend shared that sometimes monthly meetings ask, "What does PYM do for us?" PYM staff and others shared that the PYM website shows what PYM does. When faced with the question of what we need from PYM, we are best served to move away from thinking of separate Monthly meetings and see how we are as a 'whole' - we are all connected.

B. Program Committee: The QLC received the November 2023 Program Support Committee report. The report shows where the money is being spent currently. A Friend asked if the request for \$500 that the Eco-Justice Collaborative had wanted to come to QLC had done so. The reply was no, not yet.

C. Additional notes: The Addressing Racism Collaborative report will be coming forward at a future meeting with a request. Monetary requests from Collaboratives are submitted to QLC. If approved, QLC informs Program Committee, which then moves the request forward for implementation. A Friend asked if QLC wanted to donate to an outside group. Does the Admin. Council have oversight for that? The CFO for PYM shared that

QLC is not a granting group. It distributes program funds only. A Friend shared a concern for more transparency and clarity in the approval process.

7. Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned in silent worship at 12:50 PM.

Note: Referenced documents and spreadsheets are located in the Quaker Life Council section of [pym.boardspot.com](http://pym.boardspot.com).

Meg Barney, acting Recording Clerk  
Providence Monthly Meeting (Media, PA)