



**Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Quaker Life Council  
Approved Minutes  
April 20, 2024**

**Attending:** Jean-Marie Barch (clerk), Meg Barney, Sue Dietz, Tom Zemaitis, Christie Duncan-Tessmer (General Secretary), Linell McCurry (CFO), Kathryn Pettus, Melissa Rycroft (Presiding Clerk), Debbie Murray-Sheppard, Nikki Mosgrove (Rising Clerk), Salvador Orellana (Deputy General Secretary), Susan Claggett, Rose Ketterer, Robert Greene, Cecliia Filauro (Executive Administrator).

**I. Worship and Welcome** Opened at 11:33 a.m., the Council entered into centering worship followed by Jean-Marie reviewing the agenda for the meeting.

**A. Review of Joint Council Session**

Friends discussed their understanding and concerns about the current relationship between the Climate Witness Stewards (CWS) and the Administrative Council. A Friend shared that Salvador has been very helpful as the CWS and Administrative Council define their roles. Jean-Marie invited each Friend on QLC to help Friends know about the implementation plan and support one another as we each take responsibility for the work, recognizing its importance.

**B. Review and Approval of Minutes**

The minutes were **Approved** and accepted with deep gratitude to Emily, our Recording Clerk.

**II. Committee and Collaborative Business  
Ministry and Care Report (M&C)**

Jean-Marie shared there are seven people currently serving on the committee. They have found that email is not as effective to reach people. Direct contact contributes to a stronger sense of connection and community. Jean-Marie asks that QLC members start to visit other meetings as a way to increase connectedness. Monthly meetings have shared their positive experiences with visitations. Currently, each M&C person is taking on a Quarter to build up a relationship over time. The M&C committee is of sufficient size at this time to undertake this work. A Friends noted that the M&C report lists that a lack of trust has developed within some meetings, committees and individuals. Within the M&C Committee itself, a high degree of trust exists. Robert shared that he is also a Climate Witness Steward (CWS) and noted that in several annual reports, the meetings did not answer all of the questions, especially in the area of climate witness. Christie

shared that if the CWS read a monthly meeting annual report and do not see any actions being taken to address the climate witness, they can ask the meeting for clarification, learn how the meeting sees its role in relation to the climate witness, and share that information within the CWS report at Annual Sessions. Robert shared that if a meeting has climate witness work being completed that did not get included into a monthly meeting annual report, Friends are encouraged to send that information directly to the CWS. Robert also shared that the CWS information is being updated for ease of use on the website. It was also noted in discussion that sometimes meetings are not addressing the Anti-Racism query in their annual reports.

### **Addendum**

Jean-Marie led Friends in a discussion of the needs of at-large members (currently two Friends) of the Yearly Meeting. PYM is to support these members in the same way a monthly meeting would do. Some possible examples would include assisting with course work costs, unexpected expenses, etc. Jean-Marie suggested an amount of \$500 per at-large member per year, with the monies to be applied for. The budget process is currently underway, and M&C is asking for consideration and approval to bring this forward at this time. Friends discussed the proposal, and reflected upon the amount, how it would be annually reviewed, if increasing numbers of at-large members could be accommodated, etc. Christie shared that the \$30,000 available annually to QLC is earmarked for programming and has not been fully used in the past. She suggested that QLC could redesignate the funds to which it already has access. Linell agreed and shared that the funds are there to support the work of QLC and the committees under its care. Friends appreciated the care that was being shown to at-large members. Jean-Marie asked if Friends were easy to move this forward with the statement that the QLC response is to support the concept and support the work to refine the process. Friends **Approved**.

### **Status Update on Quakers Against Gun Violence Collaborative membership**

Jean-Marie asked Friends to recall that QLC has been attempting to be supportive to the Gun Collaborative while being true to our understanding of how the collaborative is to function. A member of the collaborative will serve as co-clerk with Pam. The announcement about the collaborative was sent out in the PYM news. Friends discussed the letter that would be going out soon, and Christie shared that the letter would be found in three places - Peace & Justice, leadership at the monthly and quarterly levels, and to contact names at monthly meetings. The language of the letter was adjusted to read that a goal of the collaborative was to work with QAMR (Quaker Action Mid-Atlantic Region) to learn how to help Friends to educate and guide legislators toward reducing gun violence.

### **Climate Witness Stewards Request of QLC committees & collaboratives**

Jean-Marie asked if Friends were clear on what the Climate Witness Stewards were asking of the QLC and wider community of Friends. It was shared that the Program Support Committee was considering this request as well. Christie wondered if it would meet the needs of the CWS for the QLC to ask how climate witness contributes to their

work. Administrative Council could be asked the same. Jean-Marie asked if QLC is comfortable in giving folks ‘nudges’ in this work, and for each of us to take a look at how we are enacting that. Climate witness is a PYM witness. We are to ask ourselves how we are coming under the weight of that. A Friend noted that we must lead by example, and perhaps share next month what we can do/are doing in this area. *Jean-Marie asked QLC to have this be considered next month.* Each Collaborative could be asked to address the questions and put it on their agendas.

### **Friends Counseling Service Advisory Panel: 2 vacancies**

Jean-Marie shared that the Friends Counseling Service Advisory Panel has two vacancies. Friends are encouraged to consider this and/or ask others if they are interested in serving in this area.

## **III. Sprints**

### **Report from Land Acknowledgment sprint**

Jean-Marie read the DRAFT aloud. She shared that it was such a privilege for her to do this work and that the work of the sprint has been rich and rewarding. Friends were positive about the drafted statement. The work and careful thought that went into creating it were clearly evident. Jean-Marie shared that the participation of a sprint member, who is a member of an indigenous tribe, greatly helped to inform the writing. Melissa asked that PYM be inclusive in who actually shares the land acknowledgement. Because PYM represents areas that belong to several tribes, the statement will be adjusted to remove the naming of any specific tribe. Friends noted that a map with the overlay of tribal areas with the PYM area could be helpful for Friends. A Friend noted that there are multiple truths of where those areas are, and tribes have been divided into different areas. Some tribes are recognized by the Federal government and other tribes do not have that distinction. A Friend noted that the western part of PA has a complicated history. A Friend noted the DRAFT statement includes the phrase of “...the ancestral lands of many indigenous people...” and as such, allows for each person to feel that their region is included. A Friend noted the strongest words in the document are ‘reciprocal’ and ‘respectful’. Jean-Marie noted that queries were included to be an appropriate way for people to engage with the statement, both on an individual level and as part of a corporate body. The QLC and First Contact Reconciliation could be involved in helping Friends to engage with this acknowledgement. The PYM could be more deeply in relationship with the indigenous peoples of the region. Melissa shared that the queries remind us that this is ongoing work, that the work continues each time we hear the land acknowledgement, and the challenge is there. Salvador suggested the queries of the document could be placed at the beginning to engage Friends at the start of the reading of the acknowledgement. A Friend shared a concern that the land acknowledgement not become an empty ritual. Jean-Marie said the land acknowledgment statement will be used at Annual Sessions and Fall Continuing Sessions. Jean-Marie asked if Friends were easy with the statement as revised and supportive to lay the sprint down with deep gratitude for their work. **Friends approved.**

### **Report from Sprint on Playbook Resource for Quaker Schools**

Christie reported the members of the sprint come from various sectors of Friends education, including one member being a student. The working group wants the playbook to be useful for Friends schools for all aspects of their work, including the strategic planning process and how a Quaker school keeps its designation as a Friends school. The group hopes to have its work be available in August.

#### Frankford Meeting Follow-up

Jean-Marie shared that she had communicated with a representative of Frankford Monthly Meeting and shared with them that QLC is supporting Frankford as they define their practices and adjust the frequency and times for their meetings for worship and business. A Friend shared that the PYM online evening Threshing Session on Meeting Structures helped Friends to learn of the various challenges and journeys that meetings are on at this time. Melissa hoped that some Friends were able to discover viewpoints and perspectives they did not know before. Melissa noted that Friends are striving to be in integrity with our faith, and to come together with grace and respect. Melissa said it is an important part of our faith to be in right relationship with each other. Friends were asked to look in *Faith & Practice* to learn what a monthly meeting is and how it is described.

#### **IV. Intervisitation**

*This item will be placed on next month's agenda.* Members of the Ministry & Care (M&C) Committee wish to increase and deepen the connection with monthly meetings. M&C wants to partner with QLC to increase connectedness across the yearly meeting.

V. Closed in worship at 1:07 p.m.

Jean-Marie Barch, clerk  
Meg Barney, substitute recording clerk

Documents used in this meeting are found in Boardspot:

03 17 2024 Quaker Life Council Draft Minutes.pdf  
M&C Report to QLC 04 20 24.pdf  
Land acknowledgement Sprint - basic principles and acknowledgement 4th Month 2024- jmpb.pdf  
Council Intervisitation Documents.pdf