

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Administrative Council
Saturday, December 11, 2021 (via Zoom)
Approved Minutes

Present: Andrew Anderson, Frank Barch, Chuck Devers, Christie Duncan-Tessmer, Jeanne Elberfeld, John Marquette, Linell McCurry, Nikki Mosgrove, Cathy Toner, Jim Waddington (Clerk), Roy Zatcoff, Tom Zemaitis. Grace Cooke, Associate Secretary for Advancement & Relationship, joined the meeting as an observer during the advocacy policy discussion.

1. Meeting started with opening worship.

2. Recording Clerk for December – Cathy Toner

3. Approval of the November minutes

The minutes of Nov. 11, 2021, were approved as circulated, with appreciation to John Marquette.

4. Advocacy Policy discussion

The following people joined the meeting one person (or group) at a time to share their reflections on the draft guidelines on lobbying and advocacy activity in PYM and to lift up questions.

a.) Wanda Wyffels, Clerk of Antiracism Collaborative (ARC)

Wanda shared some queries with Admin Council, including: How does Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) navigate the waters of advocacy vs. lobbying? Are there nuances between lobbying and advocacy not fully fleshed out in the guidelines that an attorney or tax professional could address? How do advocates speak truth to power? Can we make guidelines less directive and more palatable? Maybe use examples of legislation that reflect ARC's concerns: a bill to create a truth and healing commission on Indian boarding school policies, HR40 to create a commission to study reparation proposals for African Americans. Tell our story. What is the root cause for PYM's concern about lobbying?

b.) Pat Finley and Ruth Darlington, Clerks of EcoJustice Collaborative (EJC), and Robert Greene, a member of Quaker Life Council

In EJC's view, the only way to make a difference on global warming is through systemic change, led by legislation. There is a recognition that PYM's tax status is contingent on complying with the IRS tax code and that PYM's tax status is critical. However, EJC doesn't think they are doing activities that would jeopardize it. In their view, PYM needs to figure out how much lobbying it can do, since acceptable levels of lobbying have not been defined by the courts. EJC wishes to continue its work and also have more say in the process of reviewing a PYM policy on lobbying. PYM might consider establishing a 501(c)(4) organization, similar to FCNL, which is a social welfare nonprofit that is expressly allowed to lobby.

c.) John Spears, PYM Friend, politically active Republican

John shared his own background and faith story and encouraged us to be open to people of all political and ideological backgrounds and views. He finds some of our communications and news too partisan. In his view, we would be a more welcoming religious community if we were more intentional about being God's big tent and less focused on politics. In direct response to the draft policy, John said he supports PYM complying with the law and safeguarding our tax-exempt status.

Admin Council members asked questions of our guests and briefly engaged in discussion with them.

Follow-up discussion included a request for some additional research on 501(c)(4) organizations. Linell will supply. **Admin wished to minute its appreciation to Wanda, Robert, Pat, Ruth, and John for joining us and sharing their views.**

5. At this point, Cathy needed to leave the meeting and Jim Waddington agreed to complete the minutes.
6. PYM clerks' meeting with PYM's attorney
On December 6, clerks and officers with significant roles in governance, as well a Friend who meets with EJC, met with the attorney PYM uses for nonprofit issues. Questions had been submitted in advance. Jim read those questions aloud and he, Linell and Christie recapped the attorney's answers. The attorney detailed the differences between lobbying and other forms of advocacy. PYM has a great deal at risk if it loses its tax-exempt status, in which case, all the meetings, schools, and organizations under our group tax exemption would lose their tax-exempt status. Our attorney advised PYM to avoid any lobbying and use the wide range of activity and expression allowed by advocacy to further its mission and witness.
7. Names for the Audit Committee Approved
Finance Committee offered nominations for the Audit Committee. The list included financially literate Friends from across the yearly meeting and from Friends organizations. **We pre-approved the list.** There were more names than required to seat the Audit Committee. Finance will see which Friends might be available to serve when it is able to set date for the Audit Committee to meet with PYM's auditors.
8. Governance Committee at-large seat
Several names were recommended to Jim for service on Governance.
9. The meeting ended with closing Worship.

Cathy Toner and Jim Waddington, recording