

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Administrative Council
Saturday, January 21, 2023
Approved Minutes

Biddle Room Arch Street Meeting House and remote

Attending: Jim Waddington (Clerk), Chuck Devers, Carter Nash, Cathy Toner, Tom Zemaitis, Kruskal Hewitt, John Marquette, Neil Holzman, Andrew Anderson (Treasurer), Linell McCurry (CFO). General Secretary Christie Duncan-Tessmer and Presiding Clerk Melissa Rycroft attended Quaker Life Council.

Regrets: Jeanne Elberfeld

1. Welcome and Worship

The meeting began with worship at 11:12 a.m.

2. Appointment of Assistant Clerk Tom Zemaitis

Nominating Council appointed Tom Zemaitis as Assistant Clerk of Administrative Council. Friends welcomed Tom in his new role. In October 2022, Admin Council had approved a Policy for Naming Assistant Clerks, where Nominating Council would name assistant clerks for Admin Council and Quaker Life Council. The assistant clerk is not a rising clerk appointment; it is a position needed by the councils and their clerks to help share the clerking workload to serve Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

3. Review and approve December minutes

The minutes of the December 10 meeting were approved as presented.

4. Appoint recording clerk for January.

John Marquette agreed to serve as Recording Clerk for this meeting. John will continue this role as available; he will not be available in February.

5. Update on referral of Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting minute to Climate Witness Stewards

In November 2022, Admin Council received a minute from Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting about using the term “impending climate catastrophe” in addition to the more familiar term “climate change.” Admin referred the minute to the Climate Witness Stewards for discernment. One of the Climate Witness Stewards, Andrew Anderson, said that the PQM minute has taken much time as they undertake the work of discernment. Clerk Jim Waddington noted that there are diverging opinions on climate change terminology and on what is helpful or unhelpful to engage Friends deeply in this important work. Work continues at the Climate Witness Stewards on how to communicate this message.

6. Committee Appointments

a. Granting Committee Nomination: Fran O’Neill (Haddonfield Monthly Meeting)

Friends approved the appointment of Fran O’Neill to the Granting Committee.

b. Property Committee Nomination: David Redenbaugh (Buckingham Friends Meeting)

Friends approved the appointment of David Redenbaugh to the Property Committee.

7. QLC Program Committee and annual Conflict of Interest disclosure

While members of the Quaker Life Council sign PYM's Conflict of Interest disclosure each year, the Quaker Life Council's Program Committee has not. The QLC Program Committee is responsible for an "envelope" of funds disbursed for programming as they discern. The Program Committee's role is analogous to the roles of the Granting Committee and granting groups, which already do sign the Conflict of Interest disclosure.

Pursuant to a request by Quaker Life Council, Administrative Council will require, effective February 28, 2023, QLC Program Committee members to file a standard PYM Conflict of Interest disclosure form online. All new committee members must complete a Conflict of Interest form during orientation and no later than within 30 days of appointment.

8. Personnel Committee request for appointment of a non-Friend

Admin Council reviewed a request from Personnel Committee for a PYM membership requirement waiver. Council has recently seen requests for non-Friend persons to be appointed to committees. The Council did not approve such a request from Granting Committee in December 2022.

Jim reviewed the Personnel Committee's proposal. Friends engaged in deep conversation about the theory and practice of membership as it regards service to PYM.

For PYM granting purposes, the granting groups require membership in PYM. Service on the Granting Committee does not require membership in PYM but does require membership in another yearly meeting or a demonstration of a connection and existing relationship with the greater PYM community.

Two Friends suggested allowing non-Friend participation in "sprint" style (limited duration, specific need) if highly specialized skills might not be available in the PYM community. Another Friend said churches have needs beyond ordinary nonprofit "best practice." Friends recognized the need for the skills required to do the work of the yearly meeting, at the same time understanding our fundamental spiritual nature.

The Clerk sensed a lack of unity on the request as received and it was not approved.

Cathy Toner, who has worked as an employment attorney, offered her availability for service to the Personnel Committee. **Administrative Council approved the appointment of Cathy Toner to the Personnel Committee effective immediately.**

Returning to the concept of "sprint" membership or service for PYM committees and the idea of having limited duration "guest" participants in a committee's work, Friends agreed these ideas needed more seasoning and additional discernment. Governance Advisory may want to look at our "marketing problem" – are our requirements for service so onerous that they discourage Friends' participation in the work that has to be done? Friends see that we are not easily finding Friends for PYM service; we need to continue our understanding of the call to service as we go forward.

9. Nominating Council membership

Nominating Council does not currently have a clerk. The assistant clerk is not interested in being clerk. Governance Advisory Committee has given some initial thought to restructuring the nominating process, but its work is preliminary.

Members of Nominating are selected in large part by quarterly meetings. Based on names on the PYM website, five of the 13 quarter positions are currently filled (Abington, Caln, Concord, Haddonfield, and Philadelphia), not including Chester Quarter's appointment, which is term limited. But changing the appointment structure could cause disaffection among the quarters, who might see that their nominating opportunities were limited or truncated. A Friend noted how the pandemic has prematurely aged Friends and caused a sense of alienation, especially among quarters more distant from Philadelphia.

Jim and Tom will contact a single quarter with no current representation on Nominating Council to find out why there has not been an appointment. If they are successful, they may contact an additional two quarters. Jim will get the names of the unrepresented quarters to Administrative Council members. Young Adult Friends may be a source of people who are ready to serve.

10. Admin Council member participation in PYM events and programs

This was discussed at the Joint Council meeting and the upcoming events list was distributed with the meeting packet.

11. Adjourn

The meeting closed with worship at 12:33 p.m.

Faithfully submitted,
John Marquette