

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Administrative Council
Saturday, April 15, 2023
Approved Minutes

Biddle Room at Arch Street Meeting House with Remote Friends

Attending: Jim Waddington (Clerk), Andrew Anderson (Treasurer), Christie Duncan-Tessmer (General Secretary), Jeanne Elberfeld, Cecilia Filauro, Kruskal Hewitt, Neil Holzman, John Marquette (Recording Clerk), Linell McCurry (Chief Financial Officer), Carter Nash, Melissa Rycroft (Presiding Clerk), Cathy Toner, Tom Zemaitis

1. Welcome and Worship

Jim Waddington opened the meeting with worship at 9:00 a.m. Christie introduced Cecilia Filauro, her new executive assistant. Cecelia will be in attendance monthly and will note items where the General Secretary's office needs to provide follow-up.

2. Review and approval of minutes

a. Identify Recording Clerk for April

John Marquette agreed to serve as recording clerk for this meeting.

b. Review and approve March minutes

The minutes of the March 18 meeting were approved as presented.

3. Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting minute on climate change language

Last November, Admin received a Minute from Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting regarding climate-change language and we asked the Climate Witness Stewards to season it on our behalf. Jim presented the Climate Witness Stewards' response and opened the meeting for discussion.

“Climate Witness Stewards’ Response to PQM Minute, 3/22/2023

It is with deep appreciation that the Climate Witness Stewards acknowledge the Philadelphia Quarter minute that calls for stronger language in order to communicate the catastrophic changes to the planet due to global warming. Many of the consequences of global warming are indeed catastrophic and the expression, “climate change” is definitely insufficient to express the scope, number, and interrelated catastrophes we are facing. Our concern with the choice of “climate catastrophe” is that it suggests that the consequence of global warming is one comprehensive event. We are also trying to find other wording that we hope suggests how we might address the coming catastrophes and how to use wording that reveals openings for change as well as demonstrates the larger perspective of potential planetary systems failures. The CWSs have also been considering ways we might communicate the urgent reality that would indicate a way forward without causing despair.

To that end, we have embraced the action area specified in the 2021 Climate Sprint Report, “Mourning Loss and Instilling Hope.” In order to address the frightening reality of global warming and assess the work we need to do, we will first have to understand

what is already lost, mourn that loss, possibly adapt to it, and then begin again with the necessary response.

The planet's ecosystems are losing coherence and the diversity we depend on is disappearing. The interdependent systems on which we rely need to be repaired. Are we as a species capable of responding to this accelerating entropy with loving faithfulness and trust? Do we have the heart and will to do it?

Our work may ultimately be to remind ourselves that although there are great losses, that are in some cases irreversible, we can still address the areas that have not yet reached that level of irreversibility. It's possible that we may be beyond the stage of applying two-word descriptors to the understandably complex task ahead, but we still have a need to speak with unity about this fearsome problem without worry that any particular expression is inadequate to express the emergency."

One Friend used the concept "res ipsa loquitur" (the thing speaks for itself), pointing out that the nuanced response from the Climate Witness Stewards shows the difficulty in reducing this complex situation to a two- or three-word phrase. The Stewards ask Friends to center down and come under the weight of our common human situation, taking in the enormity of our condition. A Friend noted we need to apply energy to counteract the "entropy" that is destroying the planet's ecosystems.

Friends received the Climate Witness Stewards' response with thanks and approved this minute:

At the Administrative Council meeting of November 19, 2022, we asked the Climate Witness Stewards to thresh the work of Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting and provide their guidance to the Council. Administrative Council unites with the response of the Stewards dated March 22, 2023, and commends it to the attention of Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting.

4. Minutes of appreciation

Tom Zemaitis read his lovely minute of appreciation for JoAnn Seaver, who asked to be released from Admin Council service in December 2022. The minute has already been approved by Personnel Committee and Administrative Council approved it today as a fitting tribute to JoAnn's work.

MINUTE OF APPRECIATION FOR JOANN SEAVER

JoAnn Seaver has generously shared her talents with the greater family of Friends in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting through her service on the Administrative Council and the Personnel Committee. Both the Council and the Committee benefitted enormously from JoAnn's insights, judgment and experience. JoAnn consistently held up both the question of how our work spoke to our mission and the expectation that each staff member be well cared for. Friends like JoAnn, who give of themselves in committee service, expand the capacity of our yearly meeting and instill our community with light and life. The members of the Administrative Council and the Personnel Committee minute their gratitude for JoAnn's unstinting and steadfast service and extend to her our best wishes in her continuing journey.

Friends approved the minute for JoAnn Seaver with thanks to Tom for his work.

Andrew will have minutes of appreciation for tanya thames taylor and Roy Zatcoff in May.

5. Finance Committee report

Andrew Anderson reported that Finance approved a request from Arch Street Meeting House Preservation Trust for a bridge loan from PYM to the Trust to cover the cost of creating construction documents, time-sensitive critical work on the building improvements under the Capital Campaign. Andrew noted that Finance Committee is confident in the ASMHPT's work and their future revenue to repay the bridge loan. Future revenue includes grants awarded but not yet received.

6. Property Committee report

Jim presented an update. Property Committee is feeling under the weight of developing guidance for quarterly meetings around monthly meetings that have been laid down and for discernment around surplus meeting properties. He connected the current work to work by others on the life cycles of monthly meetings, including a hospice model for meetings which are no longer able to sustain themselves. John elaborated on issues of outparcels like burial grounds and graveyards, different ways monthly meetings may or may not be addressing those properties.

Christie shared a link to a publications on the PYM website on the lifecycle of meetings: www.pym.org/life-cycle-of-meetings-series. They are Faithful Always: Transitions and Endings for Quaker Meetings and Churches Near the End of the Life Cycle, edited by Emily Provance and Dorothy Crannell, and "The Life Cycle of Meetings," by Emily Provance, published by New York Yearly Meeting. They are also available as hard copies, thanks to the generosity of the Mosher Fund of New England Yearly Meeting, a private donor, and the FWCC Section of Americas office.

A Friend asked if monthly meetings do land acknowledgments on their outparcels and burial grounds, if they include indigenous peoples in conversations about land they no longer wished to own. Jim responded that Property Committee has discussed this, but it understands that most of these properties are burdened with significant costs and liabilities. Linell offered to research Pennsylvania law regulating the maintenance and use of historic cemeteries and burial grounds.

7. Personnel Committee appointment: Lucas Richie

Friends welcome the return of former PYM employee Lucas Richie to service on the Personnel Committee and approved his appointment.

8. Terms Limits

a) Affirmation of Granting Committee terms

At Admin Council's meeting of November 19, 2022, service lengths for all councils, committees and granting groups were limited to two three-year terms. All terms end July 31. We further agreed that if current granting group members are in their third term, those terms will end December 31, 2023. The Granting Committee handbook needs to be updated as well.

b) Update on Climate Witness Steward terms

Terms for Climate Witness Stewards were originally three terms of two years each. Their service has been conformed with others to two three-year terms.

9. Policy on quarterly meeting appointments to Nominating Council

There has been no mechanism to track quarterly meeting appointments to Nominating Council. Admin Council has not recorded minutes from quarters when they appointed Friends to Nominating. The new policy states that if a quarterly meeting appoints someone to Nominating Council, a minute must be sent to Administrative Council for consideration and final approval.

Friends approved the policy. In addition, after Administrative Council receives appointments from quarters and acts on them, it must reply to the quarters with the new appointee's term start and end dates and any general information about term limits.

10. **Adjourn**

The meeting of the Administrative Council closed with worship at 10:09 am.

Faithfully submitted,
John Marquette