

PHILADELPHIA YEARLY MEETING

General Services Standing Committee

Wed. May 7, 2008; 4:30pm-6:30pm

Arch Street Meeting House

Final Minutes

1. Opening Worship (4:30pm)

2. Introductions & Regrets:

Present: Richard Morse and Gerald "Jed" Smith (co clerks), Eileen Green, Don Owen, Ernie Nute, Wally Evans, Doug Meaker, Harry Williams, John Cope, George Garrettson and John Winterbottom,

Guests: Peter Arfaa, Wright Horne (Salem MM and PYM's Interim Development Director), Kathy Reilly (PYM staff), Marissa Perrone (staff), Chris Densmore (Curator and Archivist) Tyla Ann Burger (Treasurer), Arthur Larrabee (General Secretary).

Regrets: Roger Wood and George "Skip" Corson

3. Sharing our **Joys and Concerns**.

4. Discussion of the **Query** for this month: Is GSSC concerned that human interaction with nature be responsible, guided by reverence for life and a sense of the splendor of God's continuing creation? (Adapted from PYM Query #10 on Stewardship of the environment.)

5. Review **Agenda** and appoint **time keeper** for meeting Doug Meaker volunteered.

6. Review, Modify, & Approve **Minutes** from March, 2008. Minutes Approved and the recording clerk was thanked for his efforts and accuracy.

7. **Records Services Group**

Chris Densmore reported on the archives of Quaker documents at Swarthmore and Haverford. Documents are in one or the other location, dating back to the Hicksite split. Swarthmore started out as the repository for Hicksite branch and Haverford for the Orthodox. **These records belong to the various Monthly Meetings. Swarthmore and Haverford are "merely" repositories. PYM has no "line authority" over archived material.**

Chris said we are facing the demands and expectations of the digital age. Many Friends have an expectation that literally everything be on line. Much is on micro film; much has been digitally scanned. For a variety of reasons (technical, financial, privacy, cultural) it is not possible or desirable to put everything on line.

Chris provided several examples of the requests they receive, such as (1) a search for a deed to the land on which the Flushing, New York MM built its Meetinghouse, circa 1690 (2) many graveyard issues such as who owns the land; who is responsible for up keep; who is interred where (3) York MM wanted to know where the old carriage house for horses was located so they could construct a building on its exact site; (4) another MM had to prove the legality of its existence as a MM that dated back to the 1820's and what MM those Friends had been worshipping at prior to 1820 to secure a loan; (5) copies of bequests from wills and other gifts.

In response to the question of how many Monthly Meetings does the Records Service Group serve, Chris said over 100 in PYM, 40 or more for Baltimore YM; 60 for New York YM and 60 or more from Monthly Meetings in the Mid West and the South.

Chris invited Friends to check out the Web site as a good guide of what is where. Do all records reside in both locations? Records from before 1840 are in one location, 1840 being the year of the Hicksite split. All records from 1840 to the present are on line. Many records are also on microfilm from the years before the digital age. If someone discovers old documents, how are they preserved today? It depends on several variables. Hard copy on acid free paper is still the "gold standard" for most archivists. Putting things on line is useful but it is fairly easy to "hack into" on line postings and alter or destroy information. Years ago everything, every year, was in one book, handwritten and bound and "sealed", Technology has changed all that; sometimes for the better and sometimes not.

Chris said that the Treasurer's handbook, published by PYM, includes a checklist suggesting what each MM ought to have on file or know where documents such as: deeds, financial records, wills, etc. should be kept. Good practices are out there, but compliance is spotty.

What is the annual cost of preserving of records at both colleges? Chris said between \$300,000 and \$400,000 for salaries, space, utilities, etc. at each college. London YM, funds 100% of the cost; NYYM gives \$10,000; PYM gives \$1,000 to each college.

Why do we need to approve RSG doing a workshop at RYM? A letter from Thomas Swain asked GSSC to do so. Approval may not be needed, but we are enthusiastic in approving RSG's presence at RYM, given what was shared this evening.

George asked how Friends know where to look to find out if there were corrections made to approved minutes; several months after those minutes have been approved. Tyla Ann shared how her MM handles that issue.

A Friend asked what the relationship of RSG with MM recording clerks is. Chris said it varies considerably. Some MM's have paid staff and they are generally easy to work with. There is less cooperation from MM's that depend on volunteers, especially with turnover in the position of recording clerk. We are not proactive in keeping track of MM's that are not sending in their records/minutes in a timely way. Chris is a curator at Swarthmore and also clerk of the RSG committee, with seven on the committee.

Chris spoke to the complexity of storing YM records, especially with PYM. Most YM's have a 5 or 6 person staff. PYM has more than 30 staff and sends 60 boxes each year, which probably involves a lot of duplication. Arthur told Chris that once renovations to 1515 Cherry Street are complete, he will spend some time with Chris and see how PYM might streamline archiving its records. PYM probably needs to do more culling before shipping records off to be archived.

What of GSSC records; where are they kept? Marissa has binders going back to 2005 and has copies in boxes ready to go to Haverford/Swarthmore along with other staff boxes. Vivian (the GSSC staff person before Marissa) sent GSSC records to Haverford. Current construction has caused moving a lot of records out of Cherry Street to be archived.

8. Development Services Working Group (DSWG)

(For Action) Consider next steps for that group in light of dwindling number of members on that working group. Wright Horne, Interim Director of Development began the presentation by noting that Elizabeth Foley used to find her own replacements, before her retirement. Assuming GSSC will be appointing from now on, does DSWG prefer specialists or generalists? Good governance is more likely to spring forth from generalists in Wright's opinion. One Friend asked "should GSSC be appointing members to a working group"?

Apparently, the rule of thumb is for standing committees to **appoint** members to any working group that plays a role in finances and/or policy. Using that rule of thumb, Friends were in unity in thinking that the DSWG should have GSSC appointed members. George was part of DSWG for two years and they seemed to do very little except receive reports. Richard had the same sense for the years he was liaison to DSWG.

A Friend pointed out that we are in transition following Elizabeth's retirement, and we should reassert our responsibility for making appointments. Our General Secretary needs to decide who on the staff will be assigned to work with DSWG. Wright volunteered to examine the "mission statement" for DSWG and circulate it, with suggestions for improvement, if any.

Our Treasurer reminded Friends that the Budget Process Committee has not had time to be able to look at our fund raising process. At the last RYM, in August of 2007, a decision was made to revisit our fund raising processes. Assigning that task to DSWG would help the Budget Process Committee, our Treasurer suggested.

Accordingly, GSSC approved a minute stating, that we (1) re-assert our authority and responsibility to name members to DSWG; (2) accept Wright Horne's offer to examine the mission statement for our review and (3) think it is rightly ordered that DSWG be asked to examine our fund raising processes, as minuted at RYM last August.

9. Burlington Meeting House

(For Action): Discuss Job Description for Director of Burlington Meeting House.

Arthur reminded us that we minuted a three year commitment to try to make Burlington into a successful "convention" destination for Quaker youth and adults and other groups. Arthur circulated a draft, as requested by GSSC, of a job description for a new director at Burlington, with a focus on marketing skills/experience.

We read through the job description as a group. There was unity that the job description was well drafted. There were several suggestions made to improve it and implement it after lengthy discussion. That discussion included:

- (1) How do we get somebody for \$44,000 with the skill sets and experience we are looking for?
- (2) One Friend reminded us that the current interim director, Jack Walz, is interested in the position.
- (3) If we require this new person to attend RYM, would there be a possible conflict of schedules between being at RYM and being present at Burlington on the same weekend?
- (4) Several Friends stressed the position needed, above all, a person with marketing skill and experience.
- (5) Another Friend agreed, suggesting the requirement of coordinating with vendors for food, linens, maintenance is of secondary importance.
- (6) One Friend said the draft sounded like three jobs rolled into one.
- (7) Another Friend asked if we could outsource the marketing to a consultant, or perhaps look to hire a recent college grad who majored in marketing?
- (8) There is no mention of any measurable outcomes; do we expect Burlington to be a break even proposition financially, or a profit center? Arthur said he envisions goal setting will occur between the new director and Kathy and those goals should include measurable outcomes. Another Friend suggested that we can measure progress in a number of ways and suggested it might be better to measure increased use, instead of gross income.
- (9) A Friend reminded us we have a three year commitment, so hiring some one who is qualified, not just a F/friendly presence, is critical if we expect measurable goal to be met. Another Friend said it is "a make it or break it" situation and three years is a very small window of opportunity.

(10) Can we tap into the talent in nearby retirement homes to serve on a working group? Are we talking about creating another working group? Several Friends said that might be necessary. The current working group is focused on the “nuts and bolts” of maintenance of the building and grounds. The current group is self appointed with no term limits.

(11) Kathy said she visited Burlington last month and she urged retirees, with the right skill sets, to become involved. Kathy suggested we need a structure with term limits and staggered terms. We need a working group with visioning skills. Another Friend said that the term limit rule has led to the loss of members on the granting groups.

(12) If we are to go in this direction with Burlington, we should look at Arch Street too.

(13) What about the notion of using a few of us on GSSC to support the new hire?

(14) Another Friend said it sounded like we are micro managing what Kathy will be doing as this person’s supervisor. This new person should have a working group, as a sounding board, and to offer spiritual support rather than technical assistance. The new person should be able to have the support of the current Burlington working group when it comes to “nuts and bolts”.

(15) How do we get a working group rapidly that will not slow down this new hire? Richard tested the notion that we make appointments tonight and ask that group to review the existing mission statement and job responsibilities.

(16) One Friend reminded us that if our investment portfolio had been diversified, we would not be in a place where all this “salvage” work is necessary.

(17) Arthur agreed to “tweak” the job description, consistent with the discussion tonight. Specifically, (a) rethink the starting salary range; (b) strengthen the importance of marketing experience in the “Qualifications” portion on page two; (c) provide some examples, such as joining the local Chamber of Commerce, on page one, under number ten of “Key Responsibilities” which speaks to maintaining a presence in the local community and (d) the possible conflict of being required to attend RYM.

Approved: GSSC hereby appoints an ad hoc committee consisting of Harry Williams, Eileen Green, Franklin Rousch and Kathy Reilly. These Friends will: (1) review the existing mission statement and responsibilities of Burlington, and (2) function as a search committee for a new director. They should meet before June 3 and be in a position to make recommendations at the next GSSC meeting. {NOTE; DO WE NEED A NAME FOR THIS GROUP?}

(For Information) Marissa gave us a brief update on the handout entitled “Inspection Report Response Inventory”. The air sampling of the HVAC system was completed and the building is safe for use. Jack Walz is looking into the floor drains downstairs and replacement of shut off valves that are corroded and still dripping. Installation of a permanent downspout extension still needs to be addressed. The brick wall still looms as the biggest issue, and one not easily resolved and with Friends still asking themselves “How does repairing the brick wall help with the program”.

10. Friends Center Renovation

(FYI) Arthur reported we are proceeding satisfactorily, but we still have not had our closing. Current legal descriptions are said to be “questionable” and the bank is now demanding a survey. How does that affect paying our bills? Friends Center has reserves, so we can we can pay bills for now. Arthur said he preferred that the survey be done before closing. A “dry” or “contingent” closing does not help us.

Arthur shared an issue about the location of the library, which is under Support and Outreach, not GSSC. There is a need for more conference room space. The possibility of moving the library to the upstairs balcony has been revived. This might be a good solution but who will pay for that move? The good news is we know that the balcony is structurally sound. Friends Fiduciary is looking for space nearby.

Some discussion is occurring about perhaps putting the Quaker info center upstairs. Might we move the info center back into Arch Street? That is where it was years ago.

The Capital Campaign ad hoc committee for Friends Center will be laid down on June 30. Pat McBee and others have done a most remarkable job. The campaign, initially hopeful of raising one million dollars, is just shy of four million.

11. GSSC Liaison Reporting

Bequest & Chace Report (Don Owen and Eileen Green)

Don and Eileen attended the Bequests meeting on May 1 and the Chace meeting on May 5.

Bequests will have seven members left as Will Bowers rotates off after nine years.

Chace has lost several members, some of whom moved away from PYM, and a few more who are "rotating off" after serving three, three year terms. Chace will be down to three or four members.

All of the interest income that flows each year from the Chace Sisters will is unrestricted. PYM designated the unrestricted income from Chace, for several purposes over 50 years ago. Half of this designated interest income is on schedule to be "de-designated" in July of 2009, and the remaining half is scheduled to be "de-designated" in July of 2010 pending Interim Meeting approval.

Kathy Reilly volunteered to research the history of PYM creating designations for Chace, which began in 1957. Bequests has a combination of restricted and unrestricted sources of interest income. Its income from unrestricted (but currently designated) funds will be subject to the "de-designation" process too.

One long serving member on GSSC reminded us that we have discussed a possible merger of these two granting groups for several years. Each granting group has had as many as 12 members. Given the "de-designation" in interest income between 2009 and 2014, and the combined strength of membership hovering around 12, perhaps this is the time to revisit the idea of a merger. Staff members said the other standing committees will be watching how GSSC chooses to proceed with this transition.

Proposed minute: GSSC shall begin investigating the feasibility of a merger between the Chace Granting Group and the Bequests Granting Group. A meeting exploring a possible merger should be scheduled as soon as possible ** with the clerks of both granting groups. In the meantime GSSC does not intend to appoint any new members to either Granting Group. **This proposal was postponed pending possible action on this topic by IM, as presented by the Budget Process Working Group in April. The proposal was postponed until the IM meeting scheduled for May 22. Friends are hopeful the meeting exploring a merger can occur between May 23 and June 4, which is the next GSSC meeting.

Don and Eileen said they intended to attend the IM meeting on May 22. Neither of our co clerks will be able to attend.

Doug Meaker reported on RYM. When does the membership want to take the time to hear from the standing committees? Survey data from last year suggests that this is not a high priority among Friends. Should we schedule all committee reports on one day instead of one or two every day? One Friend said in times past, a great deal of what was reported was second guessed and "torpedoed" by Friends who had no grasp of the complexity of some issues or of the research and seasoning that had occurred.

Should we have interest group sessions and/or booths as places to seek information?

Funny hats and other creative ideas are being planned. The fee schedule has been drafted. One Friend said a family of four will probably spent \$800 to \$1,000. Another Friend said a family of four can not expect to go on a vacation anywhere and spend any less. Another Friend reminded us there is scholarship money available.

12. GSSC Naming Matters

Report by Wally. **Shall we reappoint Jackie Bowers for personnel group? Yes. APPROVED**
Shall we name Doug Meaker as GSSC liaison to Pemberton? Yes. Approved.

June is our last date and we need to bring forth a lot of names. Wally read names he has received from a number of sources asking Friends who knew any of these to signify by raising their hands. Those names were: Ann Chilsom, Bob Horvey, Chip Poston, Pam Matea-Draper, (Evan's wife) Clifton Smoot, Craig Stock, Pat Williams, David Jones, Jeff Perkins, Emily Myers, Sandra Baggut, Laura Blakes-Price and Mary Hepburn.

13. Standing Committee Administrative Matters:

- a) Record Volunteer Hours - & Expenses
The time sheet was passed around and completed.
- b) Marissa's last day with PYM will be on Tuesday June, 3.
Before adjourning, a minute of appreciation for Marissa's three years as the staff member assigned to assist GSSC was proposed and enthusiastically approved.
Marissa thanked GSSC members for all of the support she received, especially on some issues that required being tender and forthright at the same time.
- c) Epistle for RYM was not discussed nor assigned.
- d) No conversation about a retreat this summer. Proposed date of August 2 will not work; conflict with RYM.
- e) **Next meeting:** Wednesday, June 4 at Arch Street from 4:30 to 6:30.
- f) The meeting was adjourned at 7:05, after a moment of silent worship.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Owen, Recorder