

**Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Interim Meeting Minutes
May 22, 2008
Arch Street Meeting House**

Opening Worship

1. Welcome - Clerk

Introduction of clerks: Jada Jackson, Clerk; Thomas Armstrong, Alternate Clerk;
Martha Smith, Recording Clerk.

Newly named appointees: Deedy Roberts/Haddonfield Meeting, Joyce Moore/
Unami Meeting, Kathleen Woloszczuk/ Frankford Meeting

Several visitors stood to be recognized.

Staff members (some present under this service, some present independently): Rita Varley, Phil Anthony,
Wright Horne, Christie Duncan-Tessmer, Carol Walz, Jack Walz, and Arthur Larrabee
stood to be recognized.

Agenda adjustment: The Peace Tax Minute will be presented by Paul Sheldon/
Lansdowne MM/ Chester Quarter.

2. General Secretary's Report – Arthur Larrabee

The staff reorganization is now complete: Kathy Reilly will be the Associate Secretary for Business and Finance, Ventina Hershey is the new Business Coordinator, Christie Duncan-Tessmer has been appointed as the Associate Secretary for Program and Religious Life, and Julian Breisford is the new Data Maintenance Specialist. Arthur explained that although there are only three directors now, there would be strong staff support for the Standing Committees. He called attention to the departure of Tom Hoopes, Marissa Perrone, and Monica Firely with appreciation for their work. Recently Earl Lyons had an accident, while on the job at Arch Street. We held Earl in the Light and posted his home address, if Friends wished to send cards.

To Arthur's call for *stories of vitality* in meetings, Tom Armstrong responded that Plymouth Meeting is celebrating its 300th anniversary with a display of the Meeting's historic artifacts to for the surrounding community to appreciate. Mark Meyers reported that London Grove Meeting hosted a plant sale that attracted 700-800 local people. While hosting an open house at Woodbury Meeting, and after an injured visitor to was treated at Cooper Hospital, Marjorie Candau learned that Quakers were instrumental in founding that institution. While preparing Arch Street Meeting minutes to be archived with Haverford, Carol Spawn uncovered a handwritten *Book of Manumissions*. During a visit to Bucks Quarterly Meeting, the General Secretary learned that: Buckingham Meeting has five new members, Bristol Meeting is now meeting weekly, the *Deepening and Strengthening Program* has been very meaningful for Falls Meeting, Plumstead Meeting is now a Monthly Meeting, and that Bucks Quarter is hosting an Iraqi family.

3. General Secretary's Evaluation Committee Report - Jada Jackson, IM Clerk

Before the report began the General Secretary left the room. Chris Nicholson (at-large member), Jackie Bowers (Clerk of Financial Stewardship Committee), Thomas Swain (Clerk of YM), and Jada Jackson (Clerk of IM) took part in the evaluation. The Clerk reported that although requesting comments last month, the Committee got no direct feedback from Interim Members. They relied on their sense of the body, YM, and comments made throughout the year in lieu of direct feedback. They looked at Arthur's portfolio, which represents the body of work he has done since starting in March of 2007. He regularly attends several committees, Interim Meetings, and the Peace Gathering Steering Committee. Many evenings Arthur works beyond 10:00p.m. He has made many presentations within and beyond the YM and is involved in the wider fellowship of Friends. The PYM staff appraisal noted his organizational skills, his deep

spiritual core, the respect with which he treats others, and that he is visionary and a good negotiator. Because the Committee is concerned that Arthur might become *burned out*, they recommend that he share and delegate his work with staff. Recognition was given for his gifts and leadership among us, his dedication and hard work, his vision of staff restructure, and for his commitment and love for PYM.

Prayerful reflections on the Report:

Are we really saying that there are no areas where Arthur can improve?

Beginning with Mark Meyers and continuing with Arthur Larrabee, the YM has become a growing community again. Because of the joy he takes in doing this work, Arthur has turned the YM back into a community. It is a delight to see Arthur using his life in this productive way.

A Friend, who had interviewed Arthur, reported that the special feeling he had about him then has been reinforced during the past two years.

Although it feels good to embrace Arthur now, we need a support structure so that he does not over do it. How can we help Arthur know when to stop, to turn out the lights, and go home?

So that he can keep his perspective as a Quaker leader, Arthur should be supported in his travels to other Yearly Meetings.

We need to support Arthur's calling by how we behave in his presence.

The comments/reflections will be considered by the evaluation group and incorporated into the final report to be received at June's IM meeting.

4. IM Governance Project Group Report- Clerk, Governance PG, Tom Armstrong

Tom asked that IM accept this report in the spirit of humility and let the Project Group be laid down and released from their task. The IM Clerk suggested that we accept this report and name a group of people to incorporate IM's comments last month and help get in preparing to take it to July Sessions.

Comments: There were a number of serious concerns (expressed at May IM) about the proposal. Space and time must be allotted for everyone to be heard and unity reached. Not all Friends were ready to accept this report (thinking that accepting it meant approval). Nor were Friends quite ready to lay the Project Group down, sensing the need to have Group members available to answer questions during the Summer Sessions.

The Project Group expressed willingness to present the Proposal to Summer Sessions with the help of Annual Sessions Planning Group.

The Clerk suggested that work and seasoning of this Proposal continue with the help of a group of Friends, who will then take it to YM in Summer Session.

Friends **approved** referring the Report to YM in Summer Session. We **received** the Report and **released** it to YM. We **released** the committee with the understanding that those willing will be available to assist in YM in Summer Session.

5. Minutes of April 24, 2008- Clerk

Minute IX: The first sentence should read, "...the Group has spent the last nine months *considering* the implementations of the recommendations..." instead of "...*trying to* implement the recommendations..." The last sentence should read "TylaAnn asked that we carefully read *all of the documents...*" instead of "...read *the proces for release of old long-term designations* in preparation for our next meeting."

Minute X: Appointments: Daryl Renschler's last name should read *Renschler*.

Nominating Committee Report: The third paragraph, which begins with *Ellen Helmuth...* should be deleted.

Minute XI: There should be a separate minute, which reads: *The Interim Meeting Naming Committee brought forward the name of Amey Hutchinson/Chestnut Hill Meeting, for Alternate Recording Clerk of IM. Friends approved.*

6. Budget Process Group, PYM Treasurer – TylaAnn Burger

a. **Establishing a “Committed Funds” process** – The BPG recommends that we do away with the term *designation* and replace it with the term *committed funds*, to be used when there is a need for funds outside of the budget process for a specific period of time. They propose the following process: If a proposal is approved by the Standing Committee, it would be forwarded to the Financial Stewardship Committee. FSC will report to IM on all requests for *committed funds*.

Question: Who can approach Standing Committee for funds? *Answer:* Working Groups can, but we are not trying to turn SC’s into granting groups. Examples of the process are funding for the 2009 Peace Gathering or for Friends Center renovations. *Answer to another question:* When a donor makes a request, which does not involve restriction, it must first be accepted by a SC.

Question: Have the granting groups, which monitor these funds, been brought into this process? *Answer:* They have not, because they will not be using these funds for ongoing work. *Comment:* A couple of Friends expressed the need for YM priorities, before we can implement the Process. However, discerning priorities will require a lot of Standing Committee time in the coming years.

Answer: The YM will begin this discernment process shortly. If this “Committed Funds” process is approved, the funds will be available in 2009; now designated funds appear as they always have. *Comment:* The way we currently budget, all of our unspent funds revert to the General Fund. This new process will allow us to commit funds to programs and projects for two or three years. *Question:* What about a specific designation, which has been in place for 15 years?

Answer: We will need to talk with PYM’s Grants Coordinator about that. If a legal commitment has been made, we must spend funds that way. *Question:* Doesn’t Interim Meeting still have the responsibility to approve new designations? Will we still be able to look at the actual language of the donor? *Answer:* IM can recreate designated funds to *committed funds*, which are not for ongoing programs.

Friends **approved** the Establishment of a “Committed Funds” Process. To the question of the amount of time this Process would take, and how much time would be delegated to other bodies, the response was, “Probably not a lot”.

b. **Proposed Schedule for Release of Designations:** General Services has the responsibility to discern with their granting groups, which funds can be released. As indicated on the schedule of Chace Funds, the asterix by \$127,040 indicates that \$100,000 of that is already committed to Friends Center Corporation. After a dialogue with the Chace Granting Group, GS Standing Committee figured out which portion of their budget to put toward their work.

Friends **approved** this schedule.

c. **The Discernment Process:** The four current priorities are good but not very useful to Standing Committees in discerning. Therefore, the Budget Process Group recommends the following: 1) PYM discerns its called work and priorities every three years. 2) A newly formed Continuing Discernment Committee guide and care for the discernment process, which begins at an Annual Session. 3) The CDC creates a workable document of the ideas and substance developed at the session, and distributes drafts of the priorities to members, meetings, committees, and staff for their input, wisdom, and thought. 4) After the CDC has collated responses from various constituencies, they create a second draft of priorities. 5) The second draft is sent to IM for seasoning and then returned to the Continuing Discernment Committee, who would create a final draft to take to Annual Sessions for approval.

We **affirmed** the authority of the BPG, in consultation with the Nominating Committee, to name an *Interim Discernment Committee* to start assisting in preparing the process of discernment of priorities at Annual Sessions in July.

7. Arch Street Project Group- Clerk, Alan Crosman

The Group looked at many written reports, proposals, and visions for the use and future of Arch Street Meetinghouse and sensed no unity among them. They consulted with the General

Secretary, the current director of Arch Street, the Clerk of IM, and held three Listening Sessions, attended by 75 Friends from around the YM. A number of needs and wants were identified, but none with a clear sense of unity. Because currently there are many groups responsible for the right use and care of the Building, the Arch Street Project Group proposed that there be one Committee responsible for program, property, policy, budget, and use of Arch Street Meeting House. Changes to the YM structure is the authority of the YM in session.

Friends **approved** sending this report and its recommendations to YM in Summer Session.

8. Minute of Travel for Lyndon S. Back- Old Haverford MM Clerk, Steven Loughin

Lyndon S. Back seeks to travel widely among Friends in Poland to retrace the steps of Rebecca Janney Timbres Clark (1896-2000), who volunteered as a young nurse for a year of service in Poland after the devastation of World War I. Lyndon S. Back is called to seek truth and discover further evidence of Rebecca Clark's work and the Quaker Mission presence in whatever documents she can find.

Friends **approved** this minute.

9. Peace Tax Fund Minute - Chester Quarter/Paul Sheldon

On behalf of Chester Quarter, Paul Sheldon, with the help of Steve Olshewsky, gave background on the minute. Paul recommended that we send the suggested letter to Congress regarding the Peace Tax Fund.

Friends **approved** sending this minute to all senators and representatives, with the Quarter working with the Peace and Concerns Standing Committee to edit the Minute prior to sending it. We **affirmed** that the Standing Committee will have final authority in this editing processing. It was suggested that Friends bring forth the minute assist PYM staff in sending it out once finalized.

10. Annual Fund Report- Interim Director of Development, Wright Horne

Our vision as a YM is growing faster than our funding; we have \$165,000 yet to raise before June 30. One thousand donors have yet to give. Wright has an idea he would like us all to think about, which he will send to us by e-mail. He could still use Phonathon callers on June 4 and 12 at Friends Center; contact Wright if you can help at 215 241 7115 or by e-mail wright@pym.org

Registration for YM in Summer Session is now available on line.

Closing worship