



# Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

*of the Religious Society of Friends*

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## *5.15.21 Quaker Life Council Minutes*

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Fifth Month 15, 2021 (using Zoom format)

### JOINT SESSION OF THE PYM QUAKER LIFE, ADMINISTRATION, AND NOMINATING COUNCILS (10:00-11:00 A.M.)

Clerked by PYM co-clerks Jean-Marie P. and Frank Barch, this session of 28 participants discussed Ayesha Imani's recent epistle and the outcomes of our recent SWOT sessions. Ayesha's concerns (and subsequent resignation from the QLC) have been examined by PYM leadership. Where do we go from here, what is still to be done? Perhaps using "restorative circles," the key is to understand the hurts and woundings -- and restore our community wholeness. This takes time and may be similar to the Truth and Transformation process being considered by the Ministry and Care Committee. Ayesha's despair over the future of this Yearly Meeting was also noted. Meanwhile, IRS has apologized for their actions, and Ayesha is comforted by the apologies and follow-up actions that are occurring. How do our decisions reinforce our commitments to becoming an anti-racist community? Follow-up actions should be prepared by QLC and M&CC.

The recent SWOT tried to be a realistic look at our situation as a "mature nonprofit" (now 340 years old!). (Are we in decline? Should we avoid calling ourselves a nonprofit?) Our most recent turnaround and restructuring took place in 2012-14. Jim Waddington's summary of the two SWOT sessions started with the questions, "Who do we serve, what do they need, and how do we meet those needs?" The resulting themes were a) balancing Council time between doing the work and self-assessment, b) encouraging monthly and quarterly meetings to initiate actions, not being top down, and c) encouraging diversity in race, age, and gender orientation. What does a culture of "radical hospitality" really look like? And what are the Councils' roles in making this happen?

To the theme of balance (a above) we might want to evaluate how our joint Council sessions and Annual (and Continuing) Sessions function for us. Balancing depends on each clerk's planning and Council members carrying out their assigned work. To b), meetings are not likely to initiate anything if they don't feel that PYM is relevant to them. Too many of us are still unclear about our current communications and use of resources. "Pruning is a painful process" -- and the recent reorganization may have left hurt in its wake that still needs to be healed.



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## ADMINISTRATIVE & QLC SHARED AGENDA ITEM (11:00-11:20 AM)

Proposed PYM pamphlet -- Christie Duncan-Tessmer presented a new PYM pamphlet that had arisen from Administrative Council for use by PYM staff and monthly meetings. Content was developed through imaging sessions this past winter. The timing goal is to have it ready in late June for mailing to all PYM member contacts. Timelines help with discipline. Other helpful suggestions were also made. In short, we praised it as a strong, relevant, vital, attractive document. **Additional comments are welcomed by Christie.**

## QUAKER LIFE COUNCIL, by Zoom, 11:35 a.m.-1:15 p.m.

Follow-up actions and decisions **are shown in bold.**

PARTICIPANTS – Marge Dawson, Sue Dietz, Zachary Dutton (Associate Secretary for Program and Religious Life), Steve Elkinton (recording clerk), Robert Greene, Bryn Hammarstrom, Susan Kight, and Anthony Stover (clerk). Absent -- Kate Bregman, and Tom Hughes.

EX OFFICIO GUESTS – Christie Duncan-Tessmer (General Secretary) and Jean-Marie P. Barch (PYM Co-Clerk).

We started and closed this session with centering worship.

WELCOME AND CHECK-INS – The Clerk welcomed us and we shared “where we are” on this gorgeous day.

## COMMITTEES AND SPRINTS

- Climate Change Sprint update -- Robert Greene reported that the new and committed sprint group is now actively meeting and preparing concrete action ideas for our June QLC meeting in preparation for Annual Sessions in July. The Co-Clerk expressed appreciation for this work.
- Program Committee Report -- Sue Dietz reported that reports from collaboratives are being collected for annual sessions. **The Nuclear Disarmament Collaborative needs a new clerk.** Now meetings are focused on re-opening after the pandemic restrictions are lifted. PYM will be releasing a recording of the May 4 Runway session on this topic soon. The Program Committee wonders why we use the terms “collaboratives” and “sprints” instead of “committee” and “ad hoc committee.” At Annual Sessions, the Program Committee report will be part of the QLC report. (The PYM newsletter in the future may feature a “collaborative of the month.”)
- Ministry & Care Committee member release – Rose Rupert has asked to be released and **we approved this release with gratitude for her service.**

NOMINATIONS FOR MINISTRY & CARE AND YOUTH PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEES – In preparation for filling these positions, Zachary described the process, looking at lists of people active in these areas in their monthly meetings. **We are invited to look over the lists that he sent us and send him nominations by May 24 so that we can form a final list at our June meeting.**



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**As we met, Zachary sent out a current roster of Council members and the committee charges to help in our discernment.**

NOMINATING COUNCIL REPORT TO QLC – Bryn and Kate finish their terms this summer. Bryn is willing to extend a year to help in continuity. Marge’s first term is up, too, but she will extend another three years. **Ayesha Imani, Guinevere Janes, and Melanie Douty-Snipes have also left the Council and these releases need to be approved at Annual Sessions.** Meanwhile the Nominating Council is striving diligently to fill our eight open positions by July. **(Guinevere’s release may be treated differently as a temporary medical leave.)**

GUIDANCE ON THE PRACTICE OF RECORDING MINUTES – Based on comments in past months, Steve welcomed suggestions for the format and style of this Council’s minutes. First, Friends commended him on his minutes over the past year. Several Friends like the detail of a discussion to reflect the actual process and struggle. (We do not practice Roberts Rules of Order). If full names are listed under participants, only first names are needed in the text. Unnecessary details should also be avoided. Minute taking is a Spirit-led ministry, reflecting how we treat each other and the agreed-upon outcomes, as well as the movings of the Spirit among us. The minute-taker is the “clerk of our narrative” attempting to capture a deep sense of the discussion.

REPORT FROM PYM CO-CLERK – Jean Marie said that the agenda for Annual Sessions is “packed tight.” There will be significant reports on the three major concerns. The Clerks Group has been very helpful as a sounding board. In discussion it was asked if the Clerks Group could act as a restorative circle. It already threshes and discerns deeply. A restorative circle unusually involves people on opposite sides of a struggle. Anthony expressed deep appreciation for Frank and Jean-Marie in stepping in to serve as our co-clerks.

**We are invited to pray in support of the co-clerks, the Clerks Group, and Spiritual guidance for Annual Sessions.**

**These QLC minutes were read, revised, and approved on April 17, 2021.**