



Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends

6.19.21 Quaker Life Council Minutes

Sixth Month 19, 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 36 participants discussed the Yearly Meeting budget, Pride Month, and the new national holiday of Juneteenth. Today the YM's budget reserves are healthy, and the YM is now in good financial shape. The budget calendar was reviewed; spending stays within available revenues (investment revenue accounts for 54%); and grants and staff account for 50% of expenses.

The co-clerk reflected on how Pride Month and Juneteenth both fall in this month. We Quakers welcome the spiritual gifts of all sorts of folks. Then university historians Emily Blanck and Tonya Thames Taylor shared reflections on the Juneteenth holiday. Emily traced how a local holiday in Galveston, TX, has now turned into a national holiday about liberation from slavery. She noted the contrast between this celebration and current efforts to suppress voting and eliminate critical race theory – freedom vs. unfreedom. Tonya added vibrant personal and family stories about bottle trees, musical celebrations, call and response, high stepping, harnessing positive energy, and some of the ironies of history. We ended worshipping over two queries: “What ya gonna do with your freedom?” “What stories of unfreedom should we be sharing?”

JOINT SESSION OF ADMINISTRATIVE & QLC (11:00-11:20 A.M.)

PYM General Secretary Christie Duncan-Tesmer explained pending PYM staff changes (to avoid surprise). In the next 6 months the coordinators for Young Adults and Care & Aging are leaving. To replace these functions, she plans to create a full-time community engagement coordinator to enhance diversity in our meetings and coordinate Resource Friends. The care & aging services will be contracted with social workers as needed. A part time assistant to the engagement coordinator may also be hired. In addition, Zachary Dutton plans to move on a year from now.



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QUAKER LIFE COUNCIL, by Zoom, 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

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

PARTICIPANTS – Kate Bregman, Marge Dawson, Sue Dietz, Zachary Dutton (Assoc. Sec. for Program & Religious Life), Steve Elkinton (recording clerk), Bryn Hammarstrom, Susan Kight, and Anthony Stover (clerk – part only).

Ex Officio Members – Andrew Anderson (PYM Treasurer), Christie Duncan-Tessmer (General Secretary), and Jean-Marie P. Barch (PYM Co-Clerk).

Guests from the Eco-Justice Sprint-- Ruth Darlington, Melissa Rycroft, Bill Cozzens, Patricia Finley, and Shelly Xia.

Absent – Robert Greene and Tom Hughes.

We started and closed this session with centering worship.

WELCOME – Sue Dietz served as alternative clerk since Anthony Stover had a conflict later in the morning.

THE CLIMATE CHANGE SPRINT'S DRAFT REPORT – Pat Finley and Ruth Darlington reported that the group has meet weekly since it was organized two months ago. Their draft report on climate change for this year's annual sessions addresses the spiritual foundation, the urgency of the issue, the YM's history with this issue, and suggests actions by level of organization (MMs, QMs, and YMs) and resources and accountability. The group gave a lot of thought to specific implementing groups and how they would function, including "a grid for accountability."

Section 3 on actions goes into details on education (a resource library, events, trainings by EQAT and POWER – in short, tools for empowerment), activism (many actions are suggested), reducing our collective carbon footprint, finances (including purchasing, philanthropy, and investments), and mourning and loss (turning despair to determination).

Discussion included:

- length of report (if shortened the report might be more effective),
 - smart use of resources (some staff + committed volunteers),
 - public witness and calls to action,
 - carbon footprint offsets,
 - our ongoing reliance on fossil fuels,
 - specific roles and task assignments,
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- how to move forward effectively (is the report too detailed or comprehensive to be accepted by the YM as a body?),
 - acknowledging that we are already well-positioned to carry out much of this work, and
 - the spiritual crisis of the losses associated with climate change.

The Eco-Justice sprint is willing to provide an executive summary.



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We are each encouraged to send in specific comments to Robert Greene and the working group by Wednesday, June 23. This is a huge effort and we applauded it without yet approving the contents fully. **A more final version will be presented to QLC for its July meeting.**

Meanwhile an advanced report may be needed by July 16. **Perhaps we will need a special called QLC meeting before then to refine this report.**

REPORT ON STATUS OF COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP – Christie reported that the Administrative Council has decided not to extend term limits of Council membership (for the sake of good governance). We should still feel free to tap Bryn’s expertise, even when his term is completed. It was suggested we might want to nominate him for a place on the Program Committee. Meanwhile, the Nominating Council is making progress in identifying new folks for QLC.

COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS – Zachary Dutton described the process of finding new members for the Ministry and Care and Youth Programs Advisory Committees. There seem to be almost too many candidates! We will consider the full slate at our meeting in July.

We did consider Connie Webster, of Sadsbury Meeting, for the Ministry & Care Committee . She is a former member of the Quaker Life Council and brings experience serving in pastoral and worship care in her local meeting for many years. She also brings a wealth of knowledge and experience of the spiritual and religious life of local meetings. **Her appointment to Ministry and Care Committee was approved.**

MINUTE OF APPRECIATION FOR MEG ROSE FROM THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE (see attached document) -- Sue Dietz described this minute of appreciation of Meg Rose’s career with Young Adult Friends. **We approved this minute of appreciation with many thanks!**

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: QLC Accountability Role for Committees – Zachary recommended that we don’t have the focus or time today to consider this fairly. This might work best next month or when we get our new members after Annual Sessions. **Jean-Marie will work with Anthony on this issue (and timing for finalizing the Climate Change report).**

We thanked Sue Dietz for filling in behind Anthony as clerk today.

These QLC minutes were read, revised, and approved on June 19, 2021.



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Minute of Appreciation for Meg Rose from Young Adult Friends

The Young Adult Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting thank Meg Rose for her faithful service as YAF Coordinator for the past four years.

Meg is an extraordinary friend, and Friend, to this community. Coming in under a time of change within the YAF community, and PYM as a whole, she has led us under a calm and nurturing manner. Meg has also brought innovative programming to the group such as picnics in Clark Park and retreats that center time for radical rest and compassionate fellowship. Throughout social distancing orders, Meg has continued to bring the community together via fun, grounding and creative virtual retreats.

Meg has spiritually nurtured and grounded the YAF community as a whole. She maintains an umbrella view of everyone who touches the community. With love and care Meg has walked with Friends through times of conflict. Additionally, under Meg's leadership YAF's have been able to make impactful motions to PYM as a whole exemplified by the Berks Detention Center Action in Spring 2019 continuing sessions, advocacy for young adult inclusion in the PYM Granting Groups, and the reform movement to allow any Friend to participate in greater PYM community regardless of their meeting membership status.

Based on "institutional knowledge," many Friends in the community have ideas of what the role of coordinator *should be*. Meg listened to those expectations and ultimately made the role her own and for that we are deeply grateful. Meg has made everyone--from Friends who join a retreat once, to Friends who never miss a program- feel not only welcomed, but that they belonged. Her attention to culturally specific needs of community members has nurtured a community framework that centers accessibility.

We will miss Meg dearly and we are excited to continue the programs Meg has so caringly built upon during her tenure. We remind Meg that she will always have a home within our community and look forward to continuing conversation and updates from our dear Friend. We wish Meg all the best with her career in social work, and in future spiritual fellowship. Cincinnati is lucky to be receiving such a caring and impactful leader in Meg. To experience her ministry has been a joy. To witness her path moving forward is an honor.

Minute of Appreciation for Meg Rose from the Program Committee

The Program Committee is charged with supporting community engagement within the Yearly Meeting. At their last meeting they received a report on the last four years of Meg Rose's work with the young adult community. In thanks they offered this minute of recognition:

Minute: The Program Committee thanks Meg Rose for her service to the Young Adult Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and wishes her well in her future career.