



Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends

10.16.21 Quaker Life Council Minutes

Tenth Month 16, 2021 (using Zoom format)

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

We were welcomed and clerked by PYM co-clerk Frank and Jean-Marie Barch with 25 participants. General Secretary Christie Duncan-Tesmer gave a report about strengthening our councils and links to all PYM members. Key points included:

- PYM's annual fund raising goal was exceeded by \$20,000 when the fiscal year ended September 30.
- The PYM website manger, Malcolm McAtee, is eager for helpful suggestions. (We are each encouraged to take the survey.)
- 14 attended the first BIPOC YAF weekend retreat.
- Aging services are being restructured with the retirement of George Schaefer, Care & Aging Coordinator.
- Carrying out our ministries can help bring us together. (But seldom in the past have they engaged everyone in the entire PYM community.)

Financial contributions are easy enough to track, but in-kinds, volunteer, and other kinds of contributions are harder to track.

Then we reviewed planning for fall Continuing Sessions, Nov. 6-7, and the challenge of getting more folks involved. Frank Barch outlined the session's parts. He urged all of us on the councils to participate. How can we translate our motivation to participate here to inspire others to get engaged? Suggestions and ideas included:

- Zoom links to in-person group at individual meetinghouses.
- Exploring ways to heal the past hurts that have occurred.
- "These days people who knew what YM used to be were appalled, and those who don't could care less."
- One-on-one invitations can make all the difference. Put out the call . . . ("Maybe we underestimate the power of individual one-to-one invitations.")
- Even active invitations often reflect hurts and the limits of our aging population.
- Those of us who love Quakerism and our community are willing to commit to service. We have the responsibility, as ambassadors for the YM, to change the narrative – or at least to listen.



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- Trusting Spirit can help us each move from past understandings (expectations, hurts, structures) to something new and better.

- Broadcast invitations may not be so effective, so one-on-one outreach based on the current ministries of climate change and fighting racism may be more effective.
- One Friend sees participating in her faith community as a form of self-care, especially supporting and being present for one another. Our acts speak louder than words.
- The current pandemic has hurt ministries of welcoming and shared meals. We need to increase inter-visitation among meetings.
- Small meetings often struggle with how to do “Quaker things.” PYM sessions can provide a good model for how larger groups of Quakers operate.
- One Friend emphasized the value of outreach through young people and social action projects outreach. Building community requires dedicated time and effort, going the extra mile. Good intentions aren’t enough.

PYM leadership is exploring ways to build on these and other ideas of outreach. How can we better share both the responsibilities we have and the joy such work brings?

Rose Ketterer and Nancy Robbins were both introduced as potential new council members.



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QUAKER LIFE COUNCIL, by Zoom, 11:15 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

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

PARTICIPANTS – Marge Dawson, Sue Dietz, Steve Elkinton (recording clerk), Robert Greene, Tom Hughes, Guinevere Janes, Anthony Stover (clerk).

Ex Officio Members – Andrew Anderson (PYM Treasurer, part), Christie Duncan-Tesmer (General Secretary, part), Zachary Dutton (Assoc. Sec. for Program & Religious Life). Guest – Rose Ketterer (Newton MM)

Absent – Susan Kight.

We started and closed with centering worship.

WELCOME – Anthony welcomed us. Rose was introduced and hopefully will be approved to join us in November. We introduced ourselves to each other and to her. She shared how she joined Friends and got involved with PYM. Steve thanked Robert for taking such good notes last month. **Anthony asked everyone to contact him if they have suggested agenda items for future QLC meetings.**

APPLICATION TO PROGRAM COMMITTEE -- Anthony reported that the PYM Library volunteers sought to become a collaborative in 2016, but that never was addressed and needs to be. **PYM Community Engagement Coordinator, Olivia Brangan, will contact the Library volunteers to re-apply to the Program Committee.** When it is approved, it will come back to us. The library is a gem and should be preserved.

ORIENTATION TO QLC COMMITTEES -- Zachary asked us to brainstorm what a successful PYM and Religious Society of Friends might be like. He asked us to share our reactions in small groups. Key concepts included:

- Other groups often do what we want, but better. Mostly we just talk with no accountability, “no teeth.”
- Living out the five pillars of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, and equality.
- Staying faith-based and flexible. “Disagreeing without being disagreeable.”
- Meeting expectations for meeting for worship.

Zachary then worked to link these ideas into the existing PYM committee structure.

This Council has care of seven committees: Program, Sessions Coordinating, Youth Programs Advisory, Ministry and Care, Friends Counseling Service Advisory Panel, Agenda, and Governance (shared with the other Councils). **We should have a regular reporting schedule for each committee.**



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Steve asked for a link to the PYM listing of committees and their members. Anthony echoed this asking staff for an updated list of monthly meetings and quarterly meeting contacts.

POLICY ON THE STEWARDSHIP OF FUNDS – After a break, Anthony described that QLC receives \$30,500 annually to support our committees. Sometime ago, all of these funds were assigned to the Program Committee to support the collaboratives and sprints under their care. The current policy is attached below (Attachment A) and Zachary explained how the current practices evolved. (Anthony noted that hardly any committee reports about funds have occurred in QLC over the past three years.)

Treasurer Anderson lauded re-apprising our process. He confirmed that the authority for the \$30,500 in Envelope Funds rests with QLC. **All of our committees can apply to the Program Committee when they need funds. Program Committee should be reporting regularly (every other month was proposed) on their expenditures, but maybe doesn't need approvals from QLC (except in special cases).**

How do we support our other committees? How much funding will we need for this? We need both regular reporting and a set-aside for the other committees. Maybe we'll benefit from budgeting at the beginning of each fiscal year. Without the data from recent years' spending it's hard to address this coherently. Sue has the Program Committee's reporting on disbursement of funds (but no one on QLC ever asked to see it.)

Anthony proposed that Program Committee report to us in November, including an accounting of funds.

EMERGING POLICY ON YM-WIDE WITNESS – Christie introduced this policy (the current draft is Attachment B below) to be explicit when we engage in a Yearly Meeting-wide witness in current times (especially addressing racism and climate change). What are the roles of different groups and staff offices? Local activism among meetings varies widely. Various groups can stimulate one another. How does the YM, as a body, speak publicly? Urgent actions (such as pending legislation) heighten the need to be well-coordinated. Marge cited a Merion Meeting event tomorrow that may be of interest to all PYM Friends. Guinevere felt the draft policy is too passive. (No action is required on this draft at this time.)



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SMALL MEETING ISSUES -- Sue reported that her recent visits to some of New Jersey's smallest meetings brought out the need for PYM to help small meetings, especially if they need to be laid down. What happens to the graveyards? When the members live in retirement communities and the children live far away, what should happen? The Administrative Council has a Property Committee that will be exploring this issue. PYM staff also have experience with this issue. Andrew and Steve pointed out that "last rites" for a meeting come too late – can PYM help revivify a meeting before it needs to be laid down?

Anthony proposes this be an agenda item for the 3-Council planning sessions on Fridays. We might also want to set up a process for helping small meetings years before they need to be laid down so that we can do more than offer ineffective answers. Meanwhile, PYM has funds that can help meetings update their structures and infrastructure.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES -- **Steve read the minutes and they were approved with minor changes.**

Attachment A – QLC Stewardship of Funds Policy

Attachment B – Draft Policy on YM-Wide Witness

Attachment A -- QLC Stewardship of Funds Policy The Quaker Life Council (QLC) Program Committee is responsible for stewarding the Quaker Life Council's funding resources. Since the inception of the Quaker Life Council, a few practices have emerged that have been useful to the Council in using its funding resources. This minute is intended to name these practices and codify them as policy moving forward. We have two sources of funding: Quaker Life Council Envelope Funds and the Strategic Project Reserve Funds. The Quaker Life Council is not a granting group; the two sources of funding described here are under the Quaker Life Council's care on behalf of the body of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM). They are a reflection of the body's intention to support work, witness, and activity with funds that help us follow the life of the spirit as it moves among us. The Program Committee regularly reports to the Quaker Life Council, per its duties in Section Two of this handbook, on all expenditures approved or recommended. Our primary source of funding comes from PYM general funds and are called the Quaker Life Council Envelope Funds. We maintain a funding application on the PYM website. We receive applications for funding from groups internal to PYM. The QLC Program Committee is empowered to approve funding requests, without the approval of the full Quaker Life Council, received from groups that are already part of the PYM structure — e.g. collaboratives, sprints, committees, granting groups, and monthly and quarterly meetings. The Program Committee makes recommendations to the Quaker Life Council for approval of the use of the Envelope Funds to support efforts of groups not already part of the PYM structure. In these cases, we typically establish a sprint group to encompass the efforts of the group applying for funding to which we then designate funds. With some exceptions, it is expected that even if a group receiving funds is not part of the PYM structure, it will still be Quaker and operating within the PYM geographic area. Our secondary source of funding



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comes from a PYM designated fund called the Strategic Project Reserve Fund. There is no application process to access these funds. They are intended for sporadic use by the Quaker Life Council on projects that directly forward

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's strategic directions. Should Strategic Project Reserve Funds be used to support specific groups, with some exceptions, it is also expected that they be Quaker and that they operate within the PYM geographic area. Any use of the Strategic Project Reserve Funds requires approval from the Quaker Life Council. While Envelope Funds are responsive to the initiatives of the body, Strategic Project Reserve Funds are used at the initiative of the Quaker Life Council. This allows for the Council to fulfill one of its roles to hold the broader, holistic picture of the spiritual wellness of the PYM community and initiate projects that are responsive to the needs of the entire body of Friends that make up Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

Attachment B – Draft Statement on PYM and Ministry

Throughout our history Friends have understood that we are not meant to conform to the ways of the world, but to live in obedience to the Light Within and through this witness to transform the world.

Faith & Practice, 2017

Our book of Faith & Practice invites Friends to witness with their lives the inward experience of divine leading. Friends, meetings, and communities within Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) express their witness in their words and actions. Our lives are enriched by our sharing the kaleidoscopic mosaic of those expressions. We understand more of God when we welcome wisdom and understanding from every person -- every person inclusive of all races, genders, sexuality, social class, political views, stages of life, education level, ability, and other aspects of our identities.

PYM serves as the space to connect and nurture people and all their expressions of witness. Within the Yearly Meeting and beyond, our policy and practice is to represent the witness of meetings and communities within PYM as by and from those groups. They are not identified as expressions of testimony of the Yearly Meeting itself.

The Yearly Meeting also speaks to testimonies, using an inclusive, capacious voice that respects the many expressions of belief, understanding and witness within PYM. The Yearly Meeting provides spiritual and moral leadership and a vision of the kingdom of God. It does not direct how individuals or groups take action in living out their witness.