

Administrative Council Report to PYM July 2021 Annual Sessions

Query: Is our meeting for business held in the spirit of a meeting for worship in which we seek divine guidance?

The Administrative Council considers prayerfully the concerns that are lifted up on any issue, acknowledging that the search for Truth is dependent upon what Spirit requires. When there has been lack of clarity or unity, agenda items have been remanded to a future meeting to allow further discernment.

The Administrative Council continues to meet jointly with Quaker Life and Nominating Council monthly on the third Saturday of almost every month. Due to the pandemic those meetings have been by Zoom rather than at the Arch Street Meeting House. Our joint council meetings begin with worship convened by our Yearly Meeting Clerks who have regularly presented timely queries for contemplation. Our shared time is focused on receiving the General Secretary's report and considering other matters of joint interest prior to breaking into separate sessions to continue with our council specific agendas. A particularly meaningful presentation to the councils in June focused on the significance of Juneteenth as a national holiday when council members Emily Blanck and tonya thames taylor shared the historic joy and vibrance around the celebration of Juneteenth.

While there is anticipation around the possibility of resuming "in person" meetings at the Arch Street Meeting House in the Fall, there is a recognition of the value of enabling electronic participation for those members at a distance or who are physically unable to attend in person.

Members and Mission

A list of our members can be found on the [Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Website](#). We are a diverse group with broad geographic representation. As a council we are called to work in alignment with the [seven strategic priorities of the Yearly Meeting](#), with a focus on the fiduciary and property responsibilities as outlined in the PYM Governance Handbook. Our members bring extensive governance experience in a variety of fields including education, legal, business, finance and non-profit management. Collectively they faithfully serve the Yearly Meeting, guided by Spirit.

New Members

The Governance Handbook provides that Admin Council will consist of up to 15 members serving not more than two terms of three years each. There were 4 additional members added at last year's Annual Sessions bringing our total up to 13 members. We will be losing at least 3 members at Annual Sessions this year and recognize that we continue to need a diverse group of additional new members to maintain the health and stability of the finances, property, personnel, and long-term vision of PYM. While a background in finance, business, law, education and non-profit governance is helpful, interested candidates for membership on the Admin Council should care deeply about the health and

well-being of PYM. If you have an interest in this important work contact any member of the Nominating Council to learn more about serving the PYM community.

Communications

The Council post minutes of meetings within a week or two of their approval at the subsequent meeting and reports to the body in writing and in person at continuing and annual sessions.

Collaboration

On January 30, 2021 the joint councils convened a full day workshop. The goal of the workshop was to identify how to better work and serve the Yearly Meeting community in the role as Council member, as a Council and as three Councils together. There was a focus on the importance of being Spirit led and Spirit reliant as we conduct the business of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Realizing that there was additional work to be done, a follow-up session of the joint Councils was scheduled for the morning of April 17 prior to our individual council meetings. The resultant report identified three major themes (and subsequent queries) that emerged from the workshop efforts:

1. Council members want a balance of council time focused on concrete task (doing the work) and self-assessment/introspection (examining the work to be done and the process of doing it). Fundamental to both is ensuring clear directives and better organization for our work (as based upon the strategic directions such as the three (3) major concerns identified by the Body). The process does not have to be perfect to get doing the work. The work should not eclipse enhancing the process.
 - a. Are we clear in our directives and how we articulate them?
 - b. What criteria should we use to ensure this balance?
2. Councils want to give emphasis and focus of perspective, prioritization, and energy to the Monthly Meetings informing Councils (not from the Councils out to the Monthly Meetings). Being attentive to the needs and the priorities of the MMs should drive the Council's efforts.
 - a. What does success at this look like?
 - b. How do we engage with meeting communities to build the necessary relationships and communication pathways to facilitate this critical communication and prioritization?
3. Council members want to empower Monthly Meetings (and Yearly Meeting gatherings) to welcome diverse members of the community. Whether people of color, families, younger people, working people, and/or any sexual orientation, our work must be driven by recognizing we exist in a diverse community and wanting all people to feel comfortable within our community. This will also support growth within PM.
 - a. What does it look like when we successfully promote a culture of radical hospitality?
 - b. What is the Councils role in getting there?

“The next step will be to explore what specific objectives we can set to define tangible actions...to lay the direction, commit to the actions, and establish criteria to hold ourselves accountable.”

Committees and Sprints

Committees and sprints are two structures used to research, season, and discern the way forward for the business of PYM, and important strategic initiatives. Current committees are Governance, Finance, Property, Granting, Personnel, Development, General Secretary Oversight & Evaluation and Audit. Admin Council members are encouraged to serve on committees that they find of interest and new members are asked to serve on committees as part of their on-boarding process. This past year all of the Admin committees were asked to update their charge incorporating DEI statements that they developed as part of their current charge. Sprints active this past year included what was previously referred to as the “Five Year Plan and Governance Review Sprint” that has been rebranded as the “Gov/Strat Sprint” and the “Addressing Racism Corporate Ministry Sprint” that has been rebranded as the “DEI Sprint”. Both sprints have solicited input from a wide range of resources to ensure that there is sufficient diversity of thought and experience represented in their findings, and both should be concluding their work this fall. Additionally, there was a “Charges Sprint” formed to work with the Committees to encourage their efforts to update their charges and inclusion of DEI statements as a fundamental component of their charge. The Charges Sprint concluded their work in July and were laid down with gratitude. The stand-alone Governance Committee which was expanded in 2020 to include Quaker Life Council and Nomination Council and has further developed their current charge recommending that their composition include 7 ex-officio members (excluding Council Clerks), and 2 additional at large members appointed by Admin Council so that they would ensure functioning as a Governance committee and avoid the appearance (and possibility) that they were functioning as an executive committee by virtue of their composition.

Finance

The Finance Committee reported that the PYM \$1 million investment in the impact Accelerator Bridge Loan Fund I, sponsored by the Reinvestment Fund (which invests directly in underserved communities) had performed above expectations which gives credence to the PYM/Friends Fiduciary effort to explore direct investment opportunities in underserved communities.

PYM remains in a secure financial condition. In February the Council received an “unqualified” (also known as “clean”) audit of FY 2020 financial reports.

Personnel

The Personnel committee recommended a “Policy on Short Term Employment” (which was approved by Administrative Council on January 16, 2021) that was designed to ensure that short-term hiring opportunities be insulated from the potential of hiring only people well known to the current staff with a goal of using these opportunities as way of broadening the diversity of people on staff. The committee’s annual report to Admin Council expressed satisfaction with the efforts to merge the human resource and diversity and inclusion staff roles at PYM.

General Secretary Oversight and Evaluation Committee (GSOEC)

There was no report in 2020 because Christie was given a leave of absence by the council and COVID complications. Survey sent to Monthly Meeting clerks in addition to clerks, Arch Street Meetinghouse board, staff, and Council members. The report reflects the ways that she is strong, and also sees opportunities for her development. Her work has been guided by Faith & Practice, the strategic directions, and her job description. This year the committee worked with her on identifying a set of goals as well. In addition, the committee committed to meeting with her regularly throughout the year to provide support.

Granting Committee

In February, Ken Park, clerk of the Granting Committee shared with Admin Council a thorough and comprehensive report of the work of the Granting Committee and its granting groups. The clerk reported that the 9 granting groups under the Granting Committee's care awarded 140 grants totaling \$1,257,522.54.

The granting groups are; Greenleaf, Assistance, Committee on Friends Education, Indian Committee, Willits Book Trust, Membership Development, Travel & Witness, Quaker Buildings and Programs and Funds for Suffering. Additional "Staff Allocated" grants (from the Anna T. Jeanes Cremation Fund and the Emergency fund totaling \$20,800.00) are included in the total figure.

The clerk highlighted several innovations and concerns in his presentation including that:

1. The implementation of the of the new PYM Conflict of Interest Policy is complete with PYM Staff acting as the repository for all Annual Disclosure Statements.
2. The Granting Committee welcomed Granting Consultants by inviting six to eight Young Adult Friends (YAFs) to join one of PYM's nine granting groups as non-voting consultants for a period of one year with the purpose of increasing YAFs awareness of PYM's available resources, supporting YAF involvement in the work of PYM, and providing YAFs with grantmaking skills and experience.
3. The Granting Committee is seeking legal guidance about other ways (other than mailing physical books and materials to recipients) the Willits Book Trust may be used in order to share the benefactor's witness.
4. The Granting Group is concerned about the modest amount of PYM Funds available to help Monthly Meetings with their maintenance needs noting that over the past three years the group had received 24 grant requests for repairs and renovations totaling \$409,172.95. The group awarded 13 grants during that period totaling \$122,684. None of the grants were for the full requested amount. The average aware was for \$9,400.
5. The Granting Group urges PYM and YAFs to be integral in identifying/developing funds to support current and future ministry in the fight against racism.

The Administrative Council expressed their appreciation for the care and centeredness with which the Granting Group has ensured significant impact within their funding parameters.

Collaboration with other PYM groups

Arch Street Meeting House Preservation Trust (ASMHPT). The ASMHPT board is appointed by the Administrative Council. Wally Evans, ASMHPT Clerk presented an annual report to the Council in December that highlighted the hiring of a new Executive Director (Sean Connolly), the completion of the relighting of the East Room and the adoption of a new master place plan which includes renovated kitchen, bathroom, and office spaces. In our April meeting Sean Connolly introduced himself to the Admin Council and provided encouraging data highlighting an increasing number of visitors to Arch Street.

Friends Center. The Friends Center is a nonprofit corporation with its own board appointed by its three equity partners (PYM, AFSC and Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting). Friends Center tenants include a diverse group of Quaker and other nonprofit organizations. Distinct from the meeting house and the office building on the campus, a third building (1520 Race Street) is very out of date and lacks modern accessibility. In their November meeting the Administrative Council waived their purchase option on the 1520 Race Street building to accommodate Friends Center efforts to sell the building to Friends Select School. That sale is expected to close in early August.

Friends Fiduciary. In January of this year Jeff Perkins presented an update to the Administrative Council regarding the growth of Friends Fiduciary and their plans to expand in order to accommodate a broader range of investors who have expressed interest in participating in Friends Fiduciary's socially responsible investment vehicles. This increased interest bodes well for the potential growth of Friends Fiduciary and may require the creation of an additional entity to allow their participation.

Conclusion

The Administrative Council functions under the weight of its fiduciary responsibility and is grateful for the trust that PYM has placed in it, while it seeks to contribute both spiritually and practically to a strong, grounded and vibrant yearly meeting.

In Peace, *Jim Waddington*. Clerk