

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Monthly Joint Council Meeting
Saturday, February 14, 2026
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Attending: Carol Alpern, Jean-Marie Barch (Clerk, Quaker Life Council), Meg Barney (Recording Clerk), Kate Bregman, Terry Cooke, Burt Dallas, Chuck Devers, Jessy Eaby, Jeanne Elberfeld (Clerk, Administrative Council), Cecilia Filauro (Staff, Executive Administrator), Lisa Stewart Garrison, Bryn Hammarstrom, Kruskal Hewitt, Sally McQuail (Recording Clerk), Chris Mohr (Staff, General Secretary), Nikki Mosgrove (Presiding Clerk), Debbie Murray-Sheppard, F. Salvador Orellana (Staff, Deputy General Secretary), David Park (Staff, Chief Financial Officer), Kathryn Pettus, George Schaefer (Clerk, Nominating Council), Selden Smith (Rising Clerk), Serita Spadoni, Elder Terri Whiteford (Guest), Deb Wood.

Regrets: Andrew Anderson, Emily Blanck (Recording Clerk), Terry Christensen, Susan Claggett, Carleton Crispin, Robert Greene, John Marquette, Bethann Morgan, Michael Moulton, Chloe Rosenthal, Cathy Toner

I. Worship

Jeanne Elberfeld welcomed Friends and led us in worship.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

Friends approved the Consent Agenda (items below).

A. Approved Minutes from Committees

1. Ministry and Care Committee
2. PYM Finance Committee
3. Program Support Committee
4. Granting Committee
5. Personnel Committee

The Joint Council accepted the minutes with gratitude.

B. Committee Appointments and Releases

1. Joint Council appointed John Hayden as Co-Clerk for the remainder of his Granting Committee term ending July 2028.

2. Joint Council appointed the following Friends to Governance Advisory Committee: Selden Smith for his term as Rising/Presiding Clerk ending July 2028 and Tom Zemaitis for his term as Treasurer ending September 2027.

3. Kate Bregman was released from Property Advisory Committee.

III. General Secretary Report

Chris Mohr shared his Report to Councils.

- A. Goals for FY 2026: Chris's report includes his goals which include seeking to visit Meetings and Quarters, develop gifts and skills in the body to cultivate leaders, advance the yearly-meeting wide witness to address racism, and manage PYM Finances to reach a balanced operating budget.
- B. Background Checks Follow-Up: PYM assists with background checks in four states including NJ, Del, MD, and PA. The overall cost for the past three years was about \$2,000. PYM is updating its procedures. Each Meeting is reminded to have and/or update its child safety policy. Some meetings have renewals of clearances that they will follow up on. Friends approved that Personnel Committee will provide guidance on this matter in the future.
- C. Intervisitation Update: Chris is making visits to Monthly Meetings and Quarterly Meetings. He has several visitations planned in the coming weeks.
- D. Addressing Racism as a Yearly Meeting: Chris notes there is a Thread Gathering being organized by staff for the body in late April. Simone and Claire will lead this work. The Pendle Hill pamphlet, Patterns of Racial Wounding and Racial Justice in Quaker Meetings, will be discussed in an upcoming Pendle Hill zoom session on February 18th.
- E. Infoline - we are in the process of testing the New Setup. Salvador shared that in real time, phone calls can go directly to many of the staff. Calls to Chris go to Cecilia first.
- F. Friends Counseling Service Advisory Panel: This advisory group is understaffed. The group reviews policy issues to support the work of the Friends Counselors on topics including virtual therapy, child safety, etc.

- G. Young Adult Friends grant (FYI): A small grant to the YAF was approved by the Travel & Witness Granting group. The YAF do not have their own account, so there is need to discern where the funds can be deposited. The CFO is holding the funds until a decision is made as to where to place them.
- H. New Approach to Leadership Team: Chris has expanded the group to include the Directors. By meeting monthly, the group will focus more on making decisions or delegating the work, and less on having discussions. This new approach will be in place for three months.
- I. Other Activities: N/A
- J. Carbon Footprint Update: The initial reports have been positive as the first two benchmarks have been reached. Arch Street and Friends Center each have made great progress with their buildings. The third benchmark involves guiding Monthly Meetings in reducing their carbon footprint. John Hayden, an individual with professional experience in this area, is willing to work with Monthly Meetings, especially Meetings that may not have folks with expertise/experience in this area. Youth will be encouraged to be part of this training and work as it moves forward at Monthly Meetings. Nikki asked that the Leadership group meet together to further discern this work and return to Council regarding next steps.

Friends accepted Chris's report with gratitude.

IV. OLD BUSINESS - Jean-Marie Barch

- A. DHS Lawsuit Update:** Chris Mohr provided an update on the DHS Lawsuit. The lower court issued a ruling on our Administrative Procedures Act claims on February 3, 2026. Only one of six APA claims was dismissed. The DHS has until Feb. 19th to file a response. The US Fourth Circuit Court will hear arguments in early May on the government's appeal of the temporary injunction that protects PYM properties, but it is "status quo" for now. Current bills underway in the House include the limit on ICE entering houses of worship.
- B. Sessions 2026 Ad Hoc Planning Group:** The following charge to Annual Sessions Planning Committee was presented for consideration..
 - a.** The ad hoc 2026 Annual Sessions Planning Committee's charge relates to the care and accountability of Annual Sessions in 2026.

With Divine assistance, and in partnership with PYM staff, the Planning Committee advises on program and logistics. The committee may also collect and review feedback on Sessions.

b. Friends approved the charge for the ad hoc group to move forward.

- C. Discussion on the permanency of Joint Council:** Last year in January, discussion included a review of how the Joint Council structure was working out. Jean-Marie shared an overview of the journey to this point. Where are we as a Joint Council? What are the challenges? What do we see as our way forward?

Friends entered into Breakout discussions followed by Group sharing. Friends noted there is a spiritual aspect that is apparent in this new format. The three areas of Nominating, Administrative, and Quaker Life are functioning better because there is unity among us. We have more assurance in what we present to the body.

What was lost in this approach included the identity that people held when they were part of a specific group. It was noted there is a need for a way to have leadings come to the body. That is different from the day to day work that is to be done - work that must have oversight. The Joint Council can provide that oversight.

Does the Joint Council need to meet every month? There are many ways to move forward with this discernment over the coming months. A Friend noted the value of gathering in person, and of using zoom for online participation. A Friend noted that we have a new General Secretary, and time is needed to adjust. Frank Barch, clerk of the Governance & Advisory Committee is present and will bring our messages to GovAdCom for their discernment of the “experiment’s” next step. Jeanne reminded us that the Joint Council should work in a timely manner to decide if it is to be a permanent structure.

The sense of community is felt amongst this group, yet a Friend noted there is not unity within the group for next steps. Chris is willing to work with Clerks to learn what is possible for discerning the structure moving forward. Being here to support Friends’ witness in the world is important. Does it effect the corporate body if we meet as a Joint Council or as three separate areas? Trust between PYM membership and the Council is important, yet not always secure. It is important to retain clarity of what the Joint Council does and its purpose.

There is a recognition that at this important moment, we are in a timely space. We ask ourselves, “What should we be doing?” A Friend shared concern for decisions to not be made too quickly about the structure, and that the Council is to carefully discern its way forward. A Friend suggested that at Annual Sessions, a brief report could be shared from the Council with an invitation to the corporate body to ask questions and provide feedback. A Friend suggested a workshop could be offered at Annual Sessions. Also, an outreach/invitation to monthly meetings could be in place. At this time period, there are 35 Bridge Contacts from Monthly Meetings.

Nikki shared that there are plans in place for an online space for monthly meetings to come together this summer. Jean-Marie affirmed that Frank Barch and Governance Advisory Committee will support Joint Council as it moves forward in this work.

V. Break and Approve Minutes: With minor corrections, Friends approved the minutes to this point.

VI. NEW BUSINESS - Jeanne Elberfeld

A. Lilly Endowment: Chris Mohr shared the Lilly Endowment Request for Proposals entitled Exploring Christian Practices Initiative:

The Lilly Endowment, located in Indiana, is offering a grant to support Christian practices. Chris believes that PYM meets the criteria and is in a good position to apply for this grant. One aspect that PYM could emphasize in its application would be active engagement of young people in the work. The application process is valuable for PYM to gain clarity in its work in this area, whether or not we receive a grant. **Friends approved staff to move forward to complete the application to meet the May 18th due date.**

B. Sessions Strategic Planning Sprint: A slate of prospective members was shared with Councils. The Clerks Team is to recruit from this list. Friends held positive responses to the names. Friends were easy with the list with a note to include those who work with children as part of the planning.

VII. COMMITTEES: No business.

VIII. SPRINTS - Jean-Marie Barch

A. Monthly Meeting/Quarterly Meeting Governance Sprint: Selden Smith, Debbie Murray-Sheppard. How does the business of the yearly meeting include topics from

the monthly meetings? A DRAFT statement has been developed after the bigger issues were addressed, which included discernment, relationship, and cultivation of eldership. **Friends accepted the report with gratitude.** Joint Council will discern where in the Governance Handbook the statement will be placed in the future.

IX. News From Around the Yearly Meeting - Jeanne Elberfeld

The memorial service for Carter Nash will be held in Harrisburg on Saturday, April 11th at 11 a.m., the same time as the Joint Council meeting. Friends offered the possibility of joining by Zoom if a link is offered or holding our own recognition of Carter at the end of our April Joint Council meeting.

Providence Meeting has been benefiting from reading the Pendle Hill pamphlets *Members One of Another* and *The Doctrine of Inward Peace*. State College Friends were thrilled to have Chris visit with them recently.

X. Future Items

Salvador, Chris, Nikki, and Selden will be gathering to consider next steps in the carbon footprint work.

XI. Recap Public Communication

This month's communication will update the body about the experience of the Joint Council structure. Discernment is ongoing regarding the positive and negative outcomes of the experiment.

Approve Minutes - Friends approved.

Jeanne Elberfeld led Friends in silent worship. The Meeting concluded at 11:58 a.m.

Next Joint Council meeting: Saturday, April 11th, 2026, 9 AM to 12 PM, Hybrid format.

Meg Barney, Recording Clerk

Sally McQuail, Recording Clerk