

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Administrative Council
Saturday, December 10, 2016
Approved Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrew Anderson (Interim Treasurer), Julian Brelsford (by phone), Harry Bryans, Penny Colgan-Davis (ex-officio, PYM Clerk), Suzanne Day, Bruce Haines (clerk), Linda Lotz, Fred Melroy, Joyce Moore, Richard Morse, Tom Peterson, tonya thames taylor.

STAFF PRESENT: Christie Duncan-Tessmer (Ex Officio) and Linell McCurry.

REGRETS: Ventina Hershey, Roy Zatcoff

1. **Opening Worship** - The Meeting opened in worship.
2. **Review and Approval Agenda and Minutes** - The minutes of the November 2016 meeting were **Approved** with one small change.
3. **Next Steps to Approval of *Faith and Practice*** - Penny acknowledged how sad she was that the revised draft of *Faith and Practice* was not adopted at Annual Sessions. Since that time, the Faith and Practice Revision Committee revisions made several changes in the final draft based on suggestions offered in July, 2016, and then finalized the document for publication. The members of the Revision Committee now say they are done and ready to be laid down. They ask that another group present the final draft for approval at PYM Sessions. The Administrative Council has responsibility for keeping Faith and Practice current, so we need to form a Sprint to complete this task. Several possibilities were discussed. Bruce and Penny were asked to come back in December with names for approval to serve on a Sprint to bring the revisions forward for final approval.

Noting that the revised draft of *Faith and Practice* was seasoned twice, as required, the Administrative Council approved the formation of a sprint to develop a process to bring the revised *Faith and Practice* forward for approval during the March, 2017 Continuing Sessions. Bruce, with input from Penny, was empowered to identify 4-6 people to serve on the sprint, including Suzanne Day of the Council and hopefully at least one member of the Faith and Practice Revision Committee that brought the revisions this far. The sprint is expected to report back to this Council before Continuing Sessions.

Penny also noted that she and Christie were scheduled to meet with several leaders from the Undoing Racism Group (URG) to explore concerns and see how best to move forward with URG overall.

4. **Granting Committee Nominating Sprint Report** - Richard Morse recommended Tom Armstrong be approved as a new member of the Granting Committee. This nomination was **Approved**. Richard encouraged Council members to offer suggestions for additional people to serve on this committee.

5. **General Secretary's Report** – Christie highlighted several items:

In the wake of the presidential election, a non-partisan letter went to PYM members explaining available resources and ways for people to get involved in PYM activities.

In response to a recommendation arising from the last annual review, Christie has delegated more authority to senior staff, making it easier for them to do their work and freeing her up for more activities outside PYM.

The position of Human Resources Coordinator has been laid down. Discussions will be held early next year regarding a new position (80% FTE) combining HR responsibilities with internal work to address racism and oppression. Staff may explore other ways to handle core HR tasks. Finance staff will pick up core HR tasks in the meantime.

In discussion, some Council members noted seeing new faces at their monthly meetings since the election and new activism has already started at some meetings as well. Everyone was encouraged to document Friends' responses to the election to assure a strong record for historical purposes. One way to do this would be submitting a "story" to the PYM website, to inform other Friends of local activities.

6. **Wealth Screening** – As part of the process for raising funds for the Arch Street Preservation Trust, a consultant has recommended a wealth screening of the PYM data base. (PYM has not done this for several years.) This is in the context of an effort to coordinate appeals so that PYM and the Trust are not competing for Friends' support; this coordination includes guidelines, a timeline, and coordinated language. The proposal for a wealth screening falls within PYM's privacy policy; the PYM list is only shared with Friends' General Conference to announce the annual gathering. In discussion, Council members noted fundraising will also be needed to help Burlington Meeting House become independent, several other Friends' organizations are finishing or starting capital campaigns, and an issue of *Friends Journal* recently addressed philanthropy. Since conducting a wealth screening is a staff function, the Council thanked Christie for this report.

7. **Guidelines for the Clerk and General Secretary** – The Clerk and General Secretary are already empowered to respond to questions from the press. During Continuing Sessions in November, there was a conversation about creating guidelines on when and whether the Clerk and General Secretary might initiate public statements on current issues on behalf of PYM. Bruce proposed that a sprint be created to consider this further.

Among the points raised in discussion:

- There are historic antecedents from which to draw upon, including early Friends' activism, as well as the Climate Change and other PYM statements that provide a strong basis for public statements,
- Various minutes have been adopted at Annual Sessions; generally, there was insufficient follow-through with these statements.
- Arthur Larrabee refrained from speaking on topics other than war, while earlier General Secretaries more frequently made public statements on a broader range of topics,
- New England and New York Yearly Meetings have adopted guidelines releasing key figures to speak publicly on their behalf. AFSC, Britain Yearly Meeting, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, and other Friends' groups might also have similar guidelines.

Christie outlined a possible process for releasing a statement, beginning with the preparation of a first draft by someone with expertise in the subject matter, then preliminary review by Christie and others, and finally released only after careful seasoning. Hearing some members' sense of urgency to move forward on this, tempered with a desire for a thoughtful and careful process, the Council **approved the creation of a sprint to conduct research, sort out issues, and report back to the Council with a proposed process by which public statements on current issues could be issued.** People interested in serving on this sprint should **contact Bruce.**

8. Governance Committee -

- a) Status of Handbook Development – Bruce reported on a conversation with David Jones, clerk of the Personnel Committee. Previously known as the Personnel Services Group, as requested by the Implementation Committee the members continued to meet since restructuring. It was noted that terms of service started from zero with the new committees, so the committee will need to work out term limits. The group has been asked to update the committee charge, workplan, etc. along with the other committees. A longer report will be presented soon, perhaps in February.
- b) 18-Month Administrative Council Work Calendar for 2017 – 2018 – Bruce, Christie and Linell have started to develop a timeline for when tasks will come to the Administrative Council. This will be shared with the Governance Committee and then to the Council for review.

9. Closing -The meeting closed with Worship at 12:45.

Respectfully Submitted
Linda Lotz, Co Recording Clerk