



Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Administrative Council
Saturday, March 16, 2024
Approved Minutes

Arch Street Meeting House and remote via Zoom`

Attending: Andrew Anderson, Terry Cooke, Chuck Devers, Christie Duncan-Tessmer (General Secretary), Jeanne Elberfeld, Cecilia Filauro (Executive Administrator), Kruskal Hewitt, Neil Holzman, John Marquette (Recording Clerk), Linell McCurry (Chief Financial Officer), Nikki Mosgrove (Rising Clerk), Carter Nash, Salvador Orellana (Deputy General Secretary), Melissa Rycroft (Presiding Clerk), Cathy Toner, Tom Zemaitis (Clerk),

Regrets: Jean-Marie Prestwich-Barch (QLC Clerk), Jim Waddington

1. Welcome & Worship

Tom Zemaitis welcomed attendees and opened the meeting with worship at 9:02 am.

Tom welcomed the newest member of Administrative Council, Terry Cooke (Haverford Friends Meeting). Friends introduced themselves in turn.

2. Review & approval of minutes

John Marquette agreed to serve as recording clerk for March.

The minutes of February 17 were approved as presented.

The minutes of the March 4 called meeting to prepare for Continuing Sessions were approved as presented.

3. Report from Arch Street Meeting House Preservation Trust

Friends welcomed Sean Connolly (Executive Director, ASMHT) and Lisa Ogletree (Board Clerk) to report on behalf of the Arch Street Meeting House Preservation Trust (ASMHT). The annual report partially replicated one given at Spring Continuing Sessions.

Sean began by reporting on the increase in visitors to 52,000 in FY 2023, up 18,000 from the year before, which was the previous best year on record. He attributed it to new signage and outdoor exhibits, as well as an expanded field trip program and tour company partnerships. The US Semiquincentennial in 2026 should see an additional major increase in visitors. Repair of a catastrophic boiler failure last year was covered by grants and capital reserves while a permanent replacement was already part of the ongoing capital campaign. In the meantime, there is temporary heat. Lisa noted that the Trust is concurrently increasing its self-funding of new initiatives while reducing expenditures from PYM. As the Trust takes on more of the financial responsibilities for the meeting house, PYM funding will decline.

Friends complemented the Trust on the annual report and for its success in bringing in grant funding. Sean connected his grant writing to successful state and private funding. He also identified granting streams that the Trust had not applied for pre-2020 and which are beginning to come to fruition now. These include special grants as well as regular operating grants.

Lisa and Sean spoke about staffing. Sean is building a stable, sustainable staffing level to permit the Trust to offer a high level of quality programming to the public. There are currently five full time and two part-time staff. ASMH staffing is at about 60 percent of the average number of staff members compared to other houses of worship.

The board membership expanded from 9 to 13 in 2022. One founding board member and former clerk, Wally Evans, rotated off in 2023; he is now co-clerk of the capital campaign. New ASMHPT board members bring experience in risk management, insurance and bylaws to the board. The board is looking forward to naming a Friend from another yearly meeting to the board in the future.

Sean reviewed the capital campaign which will upgrade infrastructure components (heating, cooling, electrical, water) and the indoor exhibits. The campaign has raised \$1.1 million, with a goal of \$4.7 million (A majority from major gifts and grants, Federal and State funding is anticipated); there is a goal for \$2 million from Friends.

4. Report from Personnel Committee

Nikki Mosgrove presented the report, which reviewed the year's work. There is no formal clerk, with members of the committee taking turns coordinating meetings. She called out Tom for the amount and high quality of work he does for the committee, incorporating language of equity and inclusion from historic portions of the handbook. She invited Council members to look to others in the yearly meeting to serve on this committee.

5. Climate Witness Stewards' Project Change Request

In their first report to Annual Sessions in July 2023, the Climate Witness Stewards offered an ad hoc carbon neutral planning proposal, which was approved.

This month the Stewards have sent a new proposal to Administrative Council. It is narrower in scope and a different direction than the original one approved in July. After lengthy discussion, Friends reflected that Administrative Council has received, though is not prepared to accept, the revised proposal. There is already a proposal in place that the Climate Witness Stewards should work on, taking advantage of available resources to accomplish the terms originally accepted and approved. Friends agreed to ask the Climate Witness Stewards to go back to the July 2023 proposal and use the people and resources available to them.

6. First Draft of Communications Policy

This matter will move to the April meeting.

7. Advocacy/Lobbying Policy

Tom introduced the topic by thanking Jeanne Elberfeld for her masterful introduction to the body of the upcoming reconsideration of the advocacy policy at Continuing Sessions on March 9. **Friends united in thanks and appreciation to Jeanne Elberfeld for her work at Spring Continuing Sessions, recognizing her gifts to the body.**

At an earlier called Admin Council meeting on March 4, there was a robust discussion of the benefits and risks of suspending the current policy while a new path forward is explored. At the conclusion, the Council decided that the message at Continuing Sessions would include a statement that the advocacy policy will be suspended, coupled with a message that no individual or group may speak for PYM unless authorized to do so.

One theme at Continuing Sessions on March 8 was wider participation in framing a policy on advocacy/lobbying, possibly by including Quaker Life Council or a working group. At Sessions, Tom welcomed wider participation, though he declined to promise that whatever came from Admin Council would be returned to the body for approval. He now asked members of Admin how to proceed with crafting a policy.

A Friend referred the group to the scope of the Administrative Council from the Governance Handbook. When we are addressing matters involving the 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, Admin Council has full authority. However, matters of the behaviors and habits of Friends need to go before the body. The General Secretary noted that the Governance Handbook has a similar list of responsibilities for the body and suggested we look at the boundaries between the two entities, the body and Admin Council.

Tom asked Kruskal Hewett, Jeanne Elberfeld, Carter Nash, and Melissa Rycroft to gather before the April Council meeting to have a more concrete discussion about how to take next steps for consideration at the April meeting.

8. Review of the FY023 Audited Financial Statements
This matter will move to the April meeting.
9. Adjourn
The meeting ended with worship at 10:30 am.

Faithfully submitted,
John Marquette