

## **ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL REPORT TO PHILADELPHIA YEARLY MEETING** **Continuing Sessions, November 3, 2018**

Along with Quaker Life Council and Nominating Council, the Administrative Council has met twice since the 2018 Annual Sessions. Meetings were held on September 15, 2018 and October 20, 2018. (Following attendance at Annual Sessions and due to vacation schedules, August is the one month of the year when councils do not routinely schedule meetings.) Various committees appointed by the Council have also met.

Following up on issues raised at Annual Sessions in 2017 and 2018, and topics that are otherwise on our agenda the council and committees have addressed the following issues.

### **Sprint to Review and Revise the PYM Clerk's, Rising Clerk's and Associate Clerk's Job Descriptions**

At Annual Sessions the Administrative Council reported that it would be appointing a sprint of six people, drawn from or recommended by each of the three councils, to consider what changes might be made to the job description for the PYM Clerk and supporting Clerks, to make this work more fully supported and less daunting for potential candidates. We hope the Sprint will have recommendations to share at the March 2019 Session.

This fall the Council appointed the following individuals to undertake this task:

- *Harry Bryans* – Harry is a member of Administrative Council and Downingtown Meeting. Harry has been asked to convene the Sprint until it selects a clerk.
- *Sue Petrocelli* – Sue was recommended by the Administrative Council. She was previously a member of the Administrative Council and currently serves on the council's Governance Committee. She is a member of Centre Meeting.
- *Anthony Stover* – Anthony is a member of the Quaker Life Council and Germantown Meeting.
- *Melanie Douty-Snipes* – Melanie is a member of the Quaker Life Council and Fallsington Meeting.
- *Betsy Bayardi* – Betsy is a member of Nominating Council and Wrightstown Meeting.
- *Susan Kight* – Susan is a member of Nominating Council and Camden (DE) Meeting.

### **Operating Reserve Policy**

At Annual Sessions in 2014 PYM approved the creation of an Operating Reserve Fund with an initial dollar target of \$1.2 million, which then equated to approximately six months of PYM's annual operating expenses. This was done to enable PYM to sustain operations through unexpected, unbudgeted, material increases in expenses or drops in income. In short, a rainy-day fund! It also promotes donor confidence in PYM's long-term stability and ability to prevent a cash flow crisis that could trigger short-term crisis-based decisions. The "good news" follow-up to this decision came at the March 2018 Sessions when we were able to announce that the \$1.2 million target had been achieved. The "granaries" had been refilled. (Genesis 41.)

Creation of an a more detailed Operating Reserve Policy was postponed to another day, which has arrived with the refilling of the reserve fund. The Finance Committee based the policy on nonprofit best practices, guided by the Urban Institute’s Nonprofit Operating Reserve Initiative Policy Toolkit. In September the Council approved the policy. It is designed to provide for maintenance of a six-month operating reserve into the future and requires the Finance Committee to review the policy every three years.

### **PYM Minutes Training Sprint**

The PYM Minutes Training Sprint was created after the March 2018 Continuing Sessions, at which time PYM approved a return to the prior practice of approving all minutes before adjourning each Sessions. The document “PYM Discernment and Expectations” was circulated and referenced before each plenary session at 2018 Annual Sessions, reminding us to consider whether our minutes are “good enough” rather than trying to succumb to group “over-edit.” The Sprint is also in the process of surveying monthly meeting recording clerks as a starting point to determine useful training and support materials.

### **Staff Voice Policy**

Staff Voice Policy – At its September meeting the Personnel Committee followed up in response to ongoing concerns about the language of the newly developed Staff Voice Policy. The policy was adopted in December 2017 following seasoning with staff in the PYM office and at Arch Street. The Committee later realized that part-time staff who chose more limited participation in routine office correspondence (staff who serve children, youth and young adult Friends), had not participated in the seasoning. Also, some non-staff members of PYM began to raise questions and concerns about the policy. This led to Personnel Committee conducting another staff meeting, a staff conference call and, at Annual Sessions in July, a Listening Session for all who wished to participate.

This fall a staff recommendation came forward to replace the policy with a clearer overarching outline of PYM expectations of staff. The Personnel Committee accepted this recommendation and asked that this proposal be tested with staff. If acceptable, staff will draft new appropriate language for review by the full staff and the Personnel Committee. Personnel Committee hopes that all staff members have a better understanding of the various ways their concerns will be welcomed within discernment processes, including during Sessions. The committee will report on progress in the spring.

### **Council Self-Assessment**

The Administrative Council Governance Committee is compiling a survey for the council to perform a self-assessment of how well we are doing our work, how we can do better, and whether we are advancing PYM Strategic Priorities. This is a prelude to taking on the larger question, with material input from other councils and others in PYM, of how we are doing with our new governance structure.

Respectfully submitted, Bruce Haines, Administrative Council Clerk