



# Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

*of the Religious Society of Friends*

## Quaker Life Council Meeting of 17 March 2018

**Present:** Cathleen Marion (Clerk ad hoc), Gray Goodman (Recording Clerk), Kate Bregman, Melanie Douty-Snipes, George Rubin, Karen Winner, Olivia Brangan, Bryn Hammarstrom

**Ex-Officio:** Penny Colgan-Davis (PYM Clerk), Christie Duncan-Tessmer (General Secretary)

**Regrets:** Jim Herr, Amy Taylor Brooks, Ayesha Imani, Kri Burkander, Zachary Dutton (staff)

### Agenda

1. Discernment Team Report
2. Program Committee Report
3. QLC Report
4. Minutes Review
5. Spiritual Connection and Grounding: Put off to April meeting.
  - a. Activities to enhance Quaker Spirituality
  - b. Activities to enhance Social Justice

Members began with worship and prayer.

**Discernment Team: Melanie Douty-Snipes:** The team is composing their report for Continuing Sessions with prayerful consideration. There is one more listening session. Friends minuted deep thanks to the clerk of the Discernment Team for the preparation of the team's report.

**Program Committee: Various Members:** Members of the committee updated members about the activities of the Collaboratives. Collaboratives mentioned included:

FCNL Network	India Friends	Eco Justice
Middle East	Decarceration	FWCC
Atlantic Coast Quaker Activists	Supporting Individual Calls to Ministry	

\$1400.00 dollars has been approved for the Committee on Friends Education's gathering of Religious Life Committees in May of 2018 and the Quaker College Fair in September of 2018. There remain \$14,775 in funds.

**QLC Report: Review of the document by Clerk Amy Taylor Brooks:** Members minuted thanks to Amy for the written report that she will give at Spring Sessions on March 24, 2018.

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**Minutes Review:** Members amended and approved the minutes.

**Annual Sessions:** Ad Hoc Clerk Cate Marion asked Friends to take time through the week to to spiritually ground themselves for Spring Sessions next Saturday, March 24, 2018.

Members ended their business with a period of worship.

Respectfully submitted, Gray Goodman, Recording Clerk.

### Quaker Life Council Report to PYM Continuing Sessions

Amy Taylor Brooks

The regular meeting time and place for the Quaker Life Council is on the third sixth day of each month from 10-1:00 at Arch Street Meeting House. We begin each meeting with a period of extended worship or spiritual sharing and connection to ground our work in God's living presence. Names and pictures of our members can be found on the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Website at <http://www.pym.org/quaker-life-council/meet-the-quaker-life-council/>. Our mission is to "undertake a solemn responsibility to help provide the yearly meeting community with humble leadership in Quaker faith and practice. With divine assistance and in relationship with other council members, Friends on the Quaker Life Council maintain the health and integrity of the community, spiritual depth and relationships within Philadelphia Yearly Meeting." <http://www.pym.org/quaker-life-council/> (March 7, 2018).

Two committees are under the auspices of the Quaker Life Council. The Program Committee reviews applications for Collaboratives and Sprints. They also review the QLC budget and make recommendations to QLC in reference to funding requests which come to us primarily from the Collaboratives as they strive to witness and to work for God's Kingdom on this earth. The Governance Committee sets the agenda for the upcoming QLC meetings and helps to ensure the well grounded processes of QLC.

Both committees are made up of members of the Quaker Life Council but they can also include members at large from the PYM membership. We are eager for interested Friends to let QLC or Nominating Committee know that you would be willing to serve on either the Program Committee or the Governance Committee.

Having just heard in February the initial proposal to consider the possibility of a third committee, The Youth Programs Advisory Committee, we are filled with joy and gratitude.

We are excited to share that the three councils -- QLC with Nominating and Administrative Councils -- have started 2018 by beginning our meetings jointly for approximately an hour where we worship, receive and engage together around the General Secretary's report and other matters of joint interest. We are getting to know each other and have been finding the time very useful to the health and vitality of PYM.

Since the last continuing session we minuted our gratitude to our dear Friend and leader Lane Taylor for her service to the Yearly Meeting as the first clerk of QLC. Her good humor, spiritual

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depth and strength of lovingly challenging the societal norms in each of us was greatly appreciated. She was led to step down as the clerk of QLC just before the last Continuing Sessions. Amy Taylor Brooks is currently serving as Interim Clerk and Kri Burkander is serving as Alternate Interim Clerk. Cate Marion also has agreed to serve as an ad hoc Clerk when needed.

We have also been aware of a need of the PYM membership to hear clearly and directly how the Spirit is moving through QLC. In order to best share the Divine work we are doing with the whole membership of PYM, we have begun the practice of finalizing and approving our minutes at each meeting and posting them thereafter on the PYM website. October, 2017 through February, 2018 minutes can be found at <http://www.pym.org/quaker-life-council/home/meeting-minutes/> (March 12, 2018). We are working on living into a process of receiving and including advanced reports and minuting decisions made, rather than keeping running notes of all aspects of our conversations. We find that we are more free to share when everything we say is not being written down and that receiving advanced documents greatly improves our productivity.

In November, QLC and Administrative Council Members approved the attached document “Carrying a Minute of Concern to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Community.” It was prepared by a joint Sprint of the Administrative and Quaker Life Councils over months of deliberation and many iterations. The document outlines the process for how Quarterly Meetings can present minutes of concern to PYM and how those minutes will be processed when received. This is being shared for seasoning with all of PYM, and we ask Friends to try using this new process for a trial period. The trial will help us to determine what if anything needs to be further clarified or changed. Thoughts of Friends are welcome to be shared with either or both Administrative or Quaker Life Council clerks.

We’ve raised many queries in our work together. One that stands out and that has been lifted up repeatedly is: **How does PYM respond to a Monthly or Quarterly Meeting in crisis?**

In December, we posed just a few Queries for PYM to consider regarding our role as an employer. While Quaker Life Council recognized that we do not steward the Human Resources component of the Yearly Meeting, we also recognize the need to be in right relationship with our employees as they have a very large impact on the health and functioning of our Yearly Meeting.

Our General Secretary took these Queries to heart and reported further at the next meeting. These are ongoing Queries that are certainly not complete but are helpful to continue for us to use as guides as we look at the health and vitality of PYM.

The Youth Programs Sprint crafted a proposal for a vision, mission and governance structure of our yearly meeting’s youth programs. The sprint consulted with PYM staff in January. In February, the sprint presented the draft to QLC for review and comments. QLC supported the idea of the Youth Programs Advisory Committee being a committee of QLC rather than a collaborative as it will be ongoing and be directly supported by the Youth Engagement Coordinator. The draft was then sent to all meetings and quarters for review and comment. The draft will also be presented at March continuing sessions. Friends are invited to submit feedback

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on the draft proposal. Once the sprint receives comments from Friends after continuing sessions, they will bring it back to QLC for final approval. Comments can be sent to [Kri@Burkander.com](mailto:Kri@Burkander.com).

Many members of QLC (Melanie Douty Snipes (clerk), Olivia Branagan, Kate Bregman, Amy Taylor Brooks, Kri Burkander, Bryn Hammerstom, Jim Herr, Ayesha Imani and Cathleen Marion) also serve on the Discernment Team. QLC has received periodic updates and has been holding them in the light as they follow the leading.

As a reminder, this was the leading: The Quaker Life Council feels led to discern further movement of the Spirit in this matter, to hold all involved faithfully, and to do any remaining listening that is needed. Any wisdom or direction that comes from this labor will be presented at the Fall Continuing Sessions. We ask the body to hold in the Light the work of the Quaker Life Council, hold all who have been touched by this matter, and especially hold in love Avis Wanda McClinton and Upper Dublin Monthly Meeting.

At the fall continuing sessions, the Discernment team was clear that more time was needed and the work was not finished. The Discernment team continues to deliberate as this report is submitted.

We appreciate the response to our request to renew PYM's process of communicating with meetings through the use of State of the Meeting Reports. We are grateful to have received the first State of the Meeting Report from Byberry meeting. Many others have also been received. Meetings are working creatively on doing their own reports in ways that enhance their meetings. We are looking forward to reading them and using them to better serve our meetings and the PYM community.

To submit your meeting's report you can do any of the following:

- Go to <http://www.pym.org/quaker-life-council/home/state-meeting-reports/> and submit an electronic report using the form set forth there; or
- Email the report to Interim QLC Clerk, Amy Taylor Brooks at: [QLClerk@pym.org](mailto:QLClerk@pym.org); or
- Email the report to Associate Secretary for Program and Religious Life, Zachary Dutton at [zdutton@pym.org](mailto:zdutton@pym.org)

In support of the collaboratives and their annual renewal, the Program Committee will ask collaboratives to send their annual reports by mid-June. Collaboratives will be encouraged to use the spiritual self assessments in Faith & Practice as a guide for their reports and to include answers to the queries we have already asked them to reflect upon with one addition, "What do you plan to do next year?" QLC members agreed that they would invite all collaboratives to send someone to a QLC meeting to make an annual report. If your collaborative would like to come in person to share your report, please let us know, and we will put you on the agenda for a third sixth day. Each collaborative has a Program Committee person assigned to them.. Collaboratives can anticipate contact from that QLC member to help with the annual report and to see if further support is needed to help the collaborative thrive.

Finally, we met in a retreat in February and spent a significant time in worship, doing spiritual grounding exercises such as walking outside, spiritually connecting with something on the Arch Street Meeting House grounds, and reporting back on this experience. We also simply shared one with the other that we honor the light in each other while looking into each other's eyes. We brainstormed future ideas for nurturing the PYM Spiritual Community.

We are grateful to serve our Yearly Meeting and appreciate the trust that each of you has placed in us. We seek to be better spiritually connected together and to live into being the world we want to see.

Yours truly in loving community, Amy Taylor Brooks, Interim Clerk of QLC

### **Carrying a Minute of Concern to the PYM Community**

(As adopted by Quaker Life and Administrative Councils on November 18, 2018)

Introduction:

This document describes the Quaker practice of raising a minute of concern to the larger Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) community. Please refer to PYM's Faith and Practice for the process of discerning and bringing minutes of concern first to monthly and quarterly meetings. Go to [www.pym.org/faith-and-practice](http://www.pym.org/faith-and-practice), and then click to the right on, "Guidelines and Procedures," and then, beneath this, click on, "Preparing Minutes."

### **Carrying a Minute of Concern to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Community (PYM)**

1. A minute of concern comes to the yearly meeting community through a quarterly meeting, after thoughtful seasoning.
2. The quarterly meeting clerk brings the minute of concern to the yearly meeting community after the concern has followed the processes set forth in [Faith and Practice \(2017\)](#).
3. The quarterly meeting clerk carries the concern to the presiding clerk of PYM.
4. The presiding clerk will promptly take the minute to the PYM administrative leadership—council clerks, General Secretary, and Treasurer.
5. The administrative leadership will direct the minute to Quaker Life Council, Administrative Council, or both and will report back to the referring quarterly meeting clerk.
6. The council(s) responsible for the minute will season the minute of concern and discern how the minute will be acted upon.

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7. Transparency and timely feedback about the discernment process are important; therefore, following initial discernment, a report of council decisions and actions shall be shared with/sent to the clerks of monthly and quarterly meetings including the content of the minute received and actions proposed at the yearly meeting level.

8. Friends then carry forward ministry of the concern with the guidance, support, and accountability of the monthly meeting, quarterly meeting, and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting together.

9. A timeframe should be established for reporting about the work in ministry, and continued discernment should happen regarding whether the calling for this work continues.