

Quaker Life Council
13 February 2017

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Present: Ayesha Imani, Bryn Hammarstrom, Melanie Douty-Snipes, George Rubin, Jim Herr, Olivia Brangan, Kri Burkander, Gray Goodman, Lane Taylor (clerk), Kate Bregman, Cate Marion.

Ex-Officio: **Penny Colgan-Davis** (PYM clerk), **Zachary Dutton** (Associate Secretary for Program and Religious Life), **Christie Duncan-Tessmer** (General Secretary), Tricia Coscia (Community Engagement Coordinator)

Regrets: Amy Taylor-Brooks

11:00 am: Worship

11:05 am: Introductions/Check-ins

11:20 am: Approval of the Agenda & the November Minutes

11:40 am: General Secretary Travel to Middle East (Christie)

12:00 pm: Update on UDMM and Support for Avis Wanda (Kri)

12:30 pm: Break

12:40 pm: Report from The Program Committee (Decision)

1:20 pm: Proposed Process for Receiving Minutes of Concern (Gov. Com.)

1:55 pm: Closing Worship

Members began with a period of worship.

Clerk Lane Taylor welcomed members and asked Friends the query, “How do you care for yourself?”

Members approved the November minutes.

General Secretary Travel to Middle East: Christie sits on the board of the National Council of Churches. The National Council has been working on the issue of the occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. They have had two called international meetings co-sponsored with the World Council of Churches on the issue of the Holy Land. The two gatherings led to a decision to sponsor a trip to the Holy Land in spring 2017 (late May-early June). Christie will be the sole Quaker representative on the trip. PYM has a Mideast Collaborative that is involved and PYM has had a long connection with Ramallah Friends School.

Should she choose to take the trip, Christie will be post a blog while on her

journey.

The objective of the trip is for church leaders to build relationships with relevant organizations in the Holy Land, especially Palestine. The trip will help to bring a national focus on Palestine and the daily suffering of the Palestinian people.

Christie would like PYM to have more visibility within and outside of the Yearly Meeting. The trip could be a galvanizing witness to the need for change in the Holy Land. It provides an opportunity for Quakers to work for justice with Non-Quakers in a very public manner. Non-Quakers often associate Quakers with justice and appreciate it when we get involved.

The National Council of Churches does work with Jewish organizations that are working for justice in the Holy Land.

Although the National Council of Churches is concerned over the steadily declining percentage of Christians in the Holy Land over the past 50 years, it has a larger concern over the ongoing suffering of Palestinians.

QLC members asked questions especially regarding having a clear public statement for the Yearly Meeting and the greater Philadelphia area.

Update on UDMM and Support for Avis Wanda McClinton:

Clerk Lane Taylor asked Friends to consider:

How does QLC engage thoughtfully in conflicts within a monthly and/or Quarterly meeting and help Friends be accountable to each other?

How can QLC engage with Friends in a way that is helpful, not hurtful?

The previous leadership of PYM worked with Upper Dublin Monthly Meeting and Avis Wanda McClinton (previous Clerk Jada Jackson attended Meeting with Upper Dublin on a weekly basis). The current General Secretary and current clerk of PYM have spoken to the leadership of Upper

Dublin Monthly Meeting about the issue of reading Avis out of the Monthly Meeting, and they requested that the Clerk of UDMM consider at least temporarily removing reading Avis Wanda out of Meeting from the agenda

There is distrust on both sides.

Christie has been working on finding a mediator who is acceptable to all concerned parties (Avis Wanda requested that person of color serve as mediator.)

Avis Wanda has requested a PYM-based Care Committee. QLC felt that all parties need support. Kri Burkander, Cate Marion, Ayesha Imani agreed to be part of a Care Committee for Upper Dublin Monthly Meeting and Avis Wanda. The Committee will work in coordination with the ongoing efforts of the General Secretary and Clerk of Yearly Meeting.

QLC supports the mediating process amongst the concerned parties.

The tragedy of the Upper Dublin situation is a cautionary tale for Friends.

It is vital for everyone in the PYM community to:

- Listen to others, even when it is painful to listen.
- See the broken humanity in others.
- Recognize the inability of some Friends to see the racism in their actions.
- Have everyone feel safe enough to speak what they think.

In sharing insights and questions, Friends began to consider:

- To what extent have some Friends practices been interpreted and implemented in an exclusionary, racist manner?

Program Committee: Jim Herr: Members examined 5 proposals for Collaboratives. The following were approved for QLC to consider:

- FWCC +Other World Relations: Connects PYM Friends to Friends through the world. **Members Approved.**
- Decarceration: Connects PYM Friends with groups working to reduce mass incarceration and aid returning citizens. **Members Approved.**
- PYM Showing Up for Racial Justice: Links PYM members to the local group training European-Americans to work with multi-racial social justice groups.

Questions

- a. Who are the conveners and their monthly meetings? There needs to be attenders from at least 2 different monthly meetings.
- b. Is the local chapter of "SURG" sympathetic to Friends values?
- c. What is the relationship to "Undoing Racism Group"?

Friends agreed to re-examine the proposal after the questions are answered.

- First Contact Relationship: Supports connections and healing amongst First Nations on the east coast with PYM.

Questions:

- a. What is the relationship between the present Indian Committee and the First Contact group?
- b. Who are the conveners and their monthly meetings? There need to be attenders from at least 2 different monthly meetings
Regarding the requirement that members of collaboratives attend PYM monthly meetings, one Friend noted: the people who have not listed attendancship are asking to become part of our community through this collaborative; how can we support and embrace that?

Friends agreed to re-examine the proposal after the questions are answered.

Receiving Minutes of Concern: postponed to the March meeting.

Members ended with a period of worship.

Respectfully submitted,

Gray Goodman,
Recording Clerk