



Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends

Quaker Life Council Meeting of 18 November 2017

Present: Gray Goodman, Bryn Hammarstrom, George Rubin, Jim Herr, Cate Marion, Karen Winner, Kri Burkander, Kate Bregman, Melanie Douty-Snipes, Amy Taylor Brooks.

Ex-Officio: Penny Colgan-Davis (PYM clerk), Christie Duncan-Tessmer (General Secretary), Triscia Coscia (Associate Secretary for Community Engagement), Andrew Anderson (Treasurer)

Regrets: Zachary Dutton (Associate Secretary for Program and Religious Life), Olivia Brangan, Ayesha Imani

Minutes

Interim clerk Amy Taylor Brooks welcomed members and invited them to take printouts of the agenda, the past two agendas, and the General Secretary's report.

Members minuted appreciation to Lane Taylor as first clerk of the Quaker Life Council. Her leadership helped create the committee and establish the structure of QLC PYM has today.

Amy explained that as Alternate Clerk of QLC, she is presently serving as Interim Clerk of QLC until a permanent clerk is determined. **Members approved.**

Kri Burkander agreed to serve as Interim Alternate Clerk. **Members approved.**

Members minuted deep appreciation to Amy and Kri for stepping forward and leading the QLC through the coming year.

Members sensed it would be helpful to have some sort of formal structure for supporting the QLC Clerk. The Governance Committee will consider the best method for supporting the clerk.

Members approved September and October minutes with amendments.

Members recognized the importance of promoting methods to deeply ground the community in Friends' spiritual practices. A community connected to God's care helps Friends embrace painful change without embracing hate and distrust.

Members approved the document "Minute of Concern" that is embedded in the September minutes. It was prepared by a joint Sprint of the Administrative and Quaker Life Councils. In considering the minute, members approved of the document with the addition of citations to the pagination in Faith and Practice and the phrase, "after thorough seasoning" to the first line so that it reads as follows:

"A minute of concern comes to the yearly meeting community through a quarterly meeting **after thorough seasoning.**"

The Administrative Council also approved the amendment after the clerk and PYM treasurer presented the revisions to that Council.

November Continuing Sessions de-brief: Tricia Coscia: Approximately 220 members were at the November Continuing Sessions. A questionnaire is going out soon to PYM members asking for input. The Sessions Coordinating Committee sensed that the spring continuing session will focus on addressing institutional racism and how monthly and quarterly meetings are addressing it.

Tricia is developing a database of available space throughout the greater Philadelphia area for COLLABORATIVES and SPRINTS to use.

Tricia passed on thanks from Friends for QLC's ongoing efforts in the Upper Dublin conflict.

Discernment Report: Melanie Douty-Snipes: Melanie updated Friends about their efforts. She brought up how:

- a. Social + traditional media make conflict resolution complex + difficult.
- b. PYM has and can better support meetings in crisis
- c. The discernment team will next listen to past leaders of PYM who were deeply involved in the conflict.

Friends are still feeling deeply pained.

Query:

How does PYM respond to a Monthly or Quarterly Meeting in crisis?

A book that might be helpful is Quaker Process For Friends on the Benches by Mathilda Navias.

General Secretary Proposal: Christie is drafting PYM Policies on Social Media, Grievance, and Staff Voice. She presented and QLC provided worshipful feedback on an initial draft policy on Staff Voice .

General Secretary Report: Christie Duncan-Tessmer: Melinda Wenner Bradley is the Youth Engagement Coordinator as of December 4, 2017. A permanent office assistant has also been hired. Two other positions in the office still need to be filled. A description for the Associate Secretary of Inclusion has been sent out to professionals in the field for feedback.

QLC accepted the report.

Friends ended with a period of worship.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gray Goodman, Recording Clerk

Next QLC Meeting: 10 a.m. 16 December 2017

General Secretary Report: Mid-October through Mid-November 2017

Business and Finances

- Mapped out the December appeal
- Reviewed and edited minutes from Annual Sessions and forwarded them for the next step on their journey.
- Corresponded with Friends Fiduciary regarding administrative fees on funds for which they are both the trustee and have the beneficial interest. Continued exploration of the impact of the admin fee on all other restricted funds with the Finance Committee.

Program

- Continuing Sessions! Much of the staff work pauses leading up to Continuing Sessions. This Fall Sessions was held at Arch Street and the logistics were the smoothest and most-well-supported by staff yet.
- Faith & Racial Justice, A Public Forum with Chris Crass and Jude-Laure Denis co-sponsored by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, American Friends Service Committee, POWER Northeast and Philly SURJ. This event is followed the next day by two more PYM-sponsored events: the East Coast Quaker Action Group hosting an organizing meeting and Chris Crass offering a workshop focused on organizing for racial justice.
- Friends in Business was a significant success. There were so many people in attendance that the dinner had to be held in the East room rather than the Penn room.
- Many PYM Friends of Color attended the FGC Retreat for Friends of Color for which PYM provided financial support and publicity.
- Attended FGC's Central Committee in Maryland. At FGC's invitation I served on a panel of clerks and GenSecs reflecting on the place of FGC in our yearly meetings. I spoke about the need for leadership in the directions our yearly and monthly meetings want to go and the need for Friends to be willing to follow. I shared three interconnected areas that I hear Friends refer to frequently and that FGC is poised for taking leadership on: anti-racism, religious education and outreach.
- Gathered monthly meeting clerks together with a primary focus of facilitating their continuing the anti-racism work of Continuing Sessions.

Communications & Technology

- Began the new practice of posting the monthly GenSec report in the public newsfeed.
- Completed the text and layout for the next edition of Faith In Practice. It focuses primarily on the work and ministry of monthly meetings. It is our largest issue so far due to the fabulous amount of activity in our community.
- Formatted and edited the General Secretary's report on NCC delegation to Middle East for distribution in print format.
- Arch Street Meeting House staff emails changed from being "@pym.org" to "@HistoricASMH.org" to more effectively brand the meeting house and the work of the Trust.

Staffing and Administration

- Revised the first section of the Annual Review to focus more concretely on expectations of collaboration, taking initiative and strong communications rather than the previous focus on values within the Quaker community.
- Completed job description draft for Director of Staffing and Inclusion. It has been reviewed by the Personnel Committee and has been sent for external review to a number of Friends who are experienced in the fields of human resources and anti-racism.
- Completed final interviews for the Office Assistant position and offered the position to Aurora Denson who accepted. She'll begin December 2.
- Completed final interviews for Youth Engagement Coordinator and hired Melinda Wenner Bradley. She will begin December 4th part-time while she finishes up her work with New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM). Coordinated announcements with NYYM to ensure our staff and their staff knew in advance and that members of NYYM and PYM heard the news at the same time.
- Completed job description for Associate Secretary for Advancement and Relationship and submitted it for posting.
- Received the resignation of the Executive Assistant who is moving into a new professional field. Took beginning steps to cover the role for the interim as well as steps to post the position.
- Made final decisions on health care benefits options. Began open enrollment for benefits.

Anti-Racism

- Attended the online training with Amanda Kemp “How to have Difficult Conversations”
- Consultation with Kathy Obear on antiracism and organizational development.
- National Council of Churches approved moving forward with a “clarion call” to churches to end racism. I continued my active involvement with this work through attending multiple phone and live Steering Committee Meetings to drive the launch and ongoing work on this initiative

Visits and Meetings

- FGC Central Committee of FGC, October 27-28
- Worshiped at Green Street Meeting and attended Adult RE discussion, October 29
- Worshiped at Radnor Meeting and spoke at forum afterwards, November 5
- Attended the governing board meeting and the annual conference for the National Council of Churches, November 7-10
- Pension Board meeting
- Arch Street Meeting House Preservation Trust donor event
- Friends Fiduciary Corporation Finance Committee meeting
- Friends Fiduciary Investment Committee meeting
- Meeting with new FWCC Treasurer