

03.21.2020 Quaker Life Council Minutes

Present: Anthony Stover (Assistant Clerk), Melanie Douty-Snipes, Kate Bregman, Bryn Hammarstrom, Cathleen Marion, George Rubin, Marge Dawson, Sue Dietz, Susan Kight

Regrets: Ayesha Imani, Amy Taylor Brooks, Julia Carrigan

Opened with silent worship.

Assistant Clerk, Anthony Stover, reminded the council that Amy Taylor-Brooks, stepped down as clerk of Quaker Life Council for personal reasons. Anthony will be clerking while the Nominating Council goes through the process of naming a clerk.

In light of the COVID-19 virus, a new agenda was suggested to replace the one previously outlined. Approval was expressed by all.

At the assistant clerk's invitation, the members of the council spoke about how they were doing. Members shared about their current situations including their concerns for health, finances, pastoral care and committee work within their meetings, and isolation. They also spoke of hope, new learning opportunities, and creative ways of sharing and connecting.

The Friends Counseling Service Coordinator, Ken Brick, has resigned as of March. The job will be posted, and interviews will start two weeks after the initial post.

The committee spoke of challenges about not being able to have in-person meeting for worship. Some meetings are using conference calling, ZOOM, Google meetings, and Facebook Live. It was suggested that people who live in close proximity have small meetings for worship, perhaps outside and with space between. A Council member shared that she is having Wednesday night worship sharing focusing on how members are coping and to share anxieties. She also spoke of the Power of Eight prayer group that is meeting virtually. They all become one around a given intention. She shared there is a sense of cooperation within her meeting but that it has been more difficult coming to terms with what is better for the whole community.

Discussion about how meetings, individuals, and PYM might communicate followed. It was stated that PYM already has in place on our website called pym.org/covid19 which includes spiritual support information. Conference calls with the clerks (and/or co-clerks) of all the monthly meetings and quarterly meetings in PYM started last week. It was also suggested that monthly meetings post to the PYM website under "Post Your Story" (yellow button).

The assistant clerk restated that Christie Duncan Tesmer will be taking a previously approved leave of absence starting April 8, 2020. Linell McCurry, Associate Secretary for Business & Finance, will be



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the lead staff when something “needs to get out” with support from Grace Sharpless Cooke, Associate Secretary for Advance & Relationship, and Zachary Dutton, Associate Secretary for Program and Religious Life. There is a rubric in place about when Christie may need to be called. When asked if there was need from any Quaker Life Council support during her absence it was felt that at this time things were in place and not much was going to change in regard to Quaker Life Council’s relationship with PYM staff. Council spoke about having faith in the team.

There is no final decision about how Continuing Sessions might proceed after being canceled due to the virus. As things keep rapidly changing, Sessions Coordinating Committee and clerk leadership are looking at what is helpful, meaningful, and possible in considering about how to move forward with Continuing Session's work. All information in business sessions will be disseminated.

It was asked if a directory of the times/days of Zoom meetings for worship could be compiled. It was stated that the mechanics were not too difficult if meetings are willing to share the information. Christie will be asked to talk to the clerks of monthly meetings about getting this information.

Collaborative annual reports are due May 1st.

State of the meeting reports are due May 1st. There was concern that it would be difficult for meetings to get together to have worship sharing and discernment around this topic because of the restrictions due to the virus. Suggestions were made on how this information might be gotten which included going through committee reports, Google Docs with each committee for their input, or to try to have a Zoom worship sharing. There is a question as to whether the May 1st date could be extended. Since the reports are now under the Ministry and Care Committee, it was decided to refer the question to the clerk, Jean-Marie Barch.

We were reminded that it is not business as usual and we need to be focused on pastoral care in this process. The state of the meeting report could be community building at this time. There are queries sent out by PYM. Additionally, in Faith and Practice page 213 deals with spiritual self-assessments.

It was decided that in the remaining two agenda items from the original agenda would be addressed.

While research had been done on the Truth and Reconciliation process, the Council is confused about exactly what was the mandate and from whom did it come. Several thought that conflict resolution and mediation would be a better solution. The real question is how the yearly meeting can move forward with people who were hurt in the past, looking at past transgressions and making amends.

The Quaker Life Council will share with the Administrative Council that this topic was discussed but has nothing to report right now. Our assistant clerk will ask the clerk of Administrative Council and the clerk of the Ministry and Care Committee to attend the next Quaker Life Council meeting (probably through Zoom) to see what each body is expecting from QLC and how to move forward. It is felt that this should not be just in the hands of Quaker Life council, but rather be shared, not in a vacuum. Past frustration, pain, and weariness was expressed by one member having already worked prayerfully with



others on discernment on this topic. She was thanked for past efforts and encouraged to continue to have involvement since her knowledge would add to the process.

Quaker Life Council report was done by Amy Taylor Brooks with help from Anthony Stover and Zachary Dutton.

Our clerks have planned an agenda item for business at Annual Sessions to continue discussing the topic of membership. Quaker Life Council is to season what was shared at the Threshing Session on membership and lend support and guidance to the clerks. To keep dialog about membership going within Quaker Life Council a Google docs site will be opened by Zachary Dutton. Those not able to access the site will use e-mail to communicate with other council members.

The Conflict of Interest statement for QLC is in an attachment sent to council members. This will need to be signed by all members.

The minutes of concern on gun violence is to be read by council members and discussed at the April 18th meeting.

On a lighter note it was mentioned that in England actors are putting on shows on-line for free, the Met. Opera is doing likewise, and that comedian Peterson Thomas Toscano was also offering his shows.

The meeting ended with a moment of silence.