



Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends

4.18.2020 Quaker Life Council Minutes

Present: Anthony Stover (clerk), Cathleen Merion, Kate Bregman, Sue Dietz, Ayesha Imani, Julia Carrigan, George Rubin, Margaret Dawson, Bryn Hammarstrom, Melanie Douty-Snipes, Zachary Dutton (staff), Olivia Brangan (staff)

Regrets: Susan Kight

The COVID-19 pandemic prevented the body from meeting in person on March 28, 2020 at Continuing Sessions to approve nominations to councils and yearly meeting officers. Therefore, the Quaker Life Council approved allowing nominated Friends to attend council meetings and participate on council committees provisionally until the PYM body can approve them formally at Annual Sessions.

Friends took some time to check in about their lives at a time of Covid-19.

Anthony and Zachary reported that the consideration of the use of a Truth and Reconciliation process to address the experience of racism in PYM is now in the hands of the QLC Ministry & Care Committee and the Governance Clerking Team (Council Clerks, Treasurer, General Secretary, and PYM Clerk). They will season the issues further and report in May as to their findings.

Olivia Brangan shared a detailed description of her work as Community Engagement Coordinator for PYM. Her report is attached in Appendix A. We were grateful to learn of the breadth of the many bridges that Olivia is building amongst Friends.

Zachary lifted up the strategy of building communities of practice. Olivia supports a community of practice of Friends who are highly engaged in service to our yearly meeting, which includes the work of many active Friends in sessions planning, collaboratives, bridge contacts, resource Friends, committees, and other groups. This is similar to other staff who have previously reported to Quaker Life Council recently. Melinda Wenner Bradley, Youth Religious Life Coordinator, is working to build a community of practice of Friends involved in youth religious life across local meetings, and George Schaefer, Care & Aging Coordinator, is building a community of practice in pastoral care as well as aging concerns. These efforts help to show that Friends' service to their faith community is valued, celebrated, and purposeful in our Quaker lives, building on one another as part of a whole.



George Rubin clerked a discussion about an additional contribution of up to \$15,000 in support of the Ujima Friends Peace Center which was approved. It was noted that there is an opportunity in the future to learn more about the Ujima Friends Peace Center (its fellowship, ministries and impact in the community) and how we can continue to build relationships and mutual support within PYM.

It was acknowledged that another time is needed to be set to consider agenda items that we were not able to address at this meeting due to time constraints. Zachary will send a doodle poll to the council members to find a date.

Respectfully submitted,
Melanie Douty-Snipes

Appendix A - Staff Report to the Quaker Life Council, Community Engagement Coordinator

Good morning, Friends. I am so happy to be with you this morning!

My name is Olivia Brangan and I am a member of Wrightstown Meeting, Bucks Quarterly Meeting. I serve our yearly meeting as the Community Engagement Coordinator.

When I think about my role, I see myself as one who cultivates and nurtures connections with Friends across the yearly meeting. In doing so, this helps to create and inspire an engaged community of practice.

In caring for and stewarding our beloved community, I am so blessed to help bring together and celebrate a group of highly active and engaged folks who are led to give their time and talents to broaden the connection in our yearly meeting.

So what does building and nurturing a connected and engaged community look like?

In building our community of practice, an important area of focus for me is bringing folks together so they may share their gifts and talents to broaden the scope of their work. Collaboratives are a great example of how this work happens.

As you know, collaboratives are a group of engaged and passionate Friends who share a common interest and leading across monthly meetings. The yearly meeting provides the platform by which this work happens – together, the impact of the collaboratives' work makes a difference in our world.



Currently the yearly meeting has 6 active and highly functioning collaboratives:

- Eco-Justice
- First Contact Reconciliation
- Legislative Policy
- Abolition of Nuclear Arms
- Middle East Collaborative
- And Spiritual Formation

Under the stewardship of the Program Committee of the Quaker Life Council, I support the work of these collaboratives in a spiritual and also in a logistical capacity. I share their work and the events of each the Collaboratives with others in the yearly meeting. Once again – this is connecting and sharing with others.

I am the primary staff support for the Program Committee which cares not only for the collaboratives, but also the stewardship of the Bridge Contact program, Resource Friends program, and PYM representatives to other Quaker and religious organizations such as FCNL (Friends Committee on National Legislation) and FWCC (Friends World Committee for Consultation). There are significant and vital relationships formed from sharing the work of our yearly meeting with others. Likewise, information sharing and bringing back the ideas to PYM from other organizations is equally as important.

The Bridge Contact program is another container for information sharing and connecting across the yearly meeting. We currently have 37 Bridge Contacts as we develop and build out this program.

In theory, all constituents of the yearly meeting should have a Bridge Contact appointed, from each monthly meeting, quarterly meeting, or worship group, to name a few as examples. The Bridge Contact supports the reciprocal relationship between the yearly meeting and their respective community.

In my role as the Community Engagement Coordinator, I also care for and nurture connections with the highly engaged leadership group of the yearly meeting - the monthly meeting and quarterly meeting clerks and quarterly meeting coordinators. We meet twice a year and also gather at Annual Sessions.

Most recently I have convened the weekly “clerks’ calls” which has served as a resource and support for this group during this unprecedented and challenging time. These calls have served the yearly meeting as a source for idea sharing, information gathering, and connection in what is a rather isolating time in our world.



I would like to transition into talking about another essential piece of my work.

I serve as the primary staff person for the Sessions Coordinating Committee of the Quaker Life Council. In my role, I support this committee in developing the vision and theme for both Annual Sessions and Continuing Sessions.

We come together as a gathered body to connect in fellowship and relationship, in celebration for each other and our gifts and talents, and in collaboration around the business of the yearly meeting.

So how does the logistical planning for Sessions happen?

This work occurs in relationship and collaboration with the staff Community Engagement Team of which I am the Team Leader.

As you can see, creating spaces for connection, engagement, and opportunities for Friends to gather together is the wonderful piece of my work.

Celebrating our community of practice, our love for each other and Spirit, and sharing ways for our community to feel a sense of belonging to a wider and connected Quaker community is such a significant part of both my work and who I am. It has become one for me.

Respectfully submitted,
Olivia Brangan
Community Engagement Coordinator