



Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends

3.20.21 Quaker Life Council Minutes

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE JOINT SESSION of the PYM Quaker Life, Administration, and Nominating Councils The session of 32 participants was clerked by PYM Co-Clerks Frank and Jean Marie P. Barch.

Third Month 20, 2021 (using Zoom format)

The clerks opened with observations about oppression and violence on many fronts today. And love is also afoot nurturing our neighbors, working in solidarity. “Hurt people hurt people.” At our best, we here are a network of love. “Let us see what love can do.”

CONTINUING SESSIONS – Anthony Stover noted that our councils are the “ambassadors” of the Yearly Meeting. We have a role in inviting our fellow Friends to join in Continuing Sessions next week and weekend. We must be models. Listening and leadership are key.

How do we do networking on Zoom? It is a real challenge. We need to notice when someone lifts up a concern or skill and note people’s facial expressions. The Nominating Council would love to have lists of attendees of the many collaborative Zoom sessions. Some people loved having a printed PYM directory (the last one was in 2014), but they are expensive to update, print, and distribute. Using the Chat function on Zoom can be distracting – maybe “chat-sharing” could be encouraged during certain breaks.

REPORT FROM GENERAL SECRETARY – Christie Duncan-Tesmer reported that several meetings are exploring Zoom and other social media effectively. What are the YM’s most important in-reach messages? It is meaningful (and can be fun) to be connected with others. There are lots of ways to be connected and lots of resources to connect to. Being welcoming and authentic is key. The YM is a place of connection. At its best it can be an amplified voice.

UJIMA GIFT – Treasurer Andrew Anderson encouraged people to contact him on this issue and updated us on much of the work that has occurred over the past month to resolve this issue. There will be a substantive report with options next month – possibly a restricted grant or a gift through a third party. PYM is also crafting a policy to handle such situations better in the future.



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QUAKER LIFE COUNCIL, by Zoom

Follow-up actions and decisions **are shown in bold.**

PARTICIPANTS – Kate Bregman, Marge Dawson, Sue Dietz, Zachary Dutton (Associate Secretary for Program and Religious Life), Steve Elkinton (recording clerk), Robert Greene, Bryn Hammarstrom, Guinevere Janes, Susan Kight, and Anthony Stover (clerk). Absent -- Melanie Douty-Snipes and Tom Hughes.

GUESTS – Andrew Anderson (PYM Treasurer) and Jean-Marie Prestwidge-Barch (PYM Co-Presiding Clerk and Clerk of Ministry and Nurture Committee).

We started this session with centering worship.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MONTH'S MINUTES – A few minor comments were suggested. Then Andrew Anderson asked that we make additional changes before we approve them. Others liked them as they are a true reflection of what transpired. The PYM Co-clerk noted that these are a narrative, not true minutes. Noting emotional tone and the workings of the Spirit of a meeting are tricky. Minutes are only an approximation, yet shouldn't be "cleaned up" away from the body.

At this point Bryn Hammarstrom took over as clerk to take the stress off Anthony's shoulders. **After discussion we agreed to lay this matter over until April. We will ask Andrew A. to learn of his additional suggested modifications and consider incorporating them in the minutes next month.** (It's OK to disagree and have conflicts in our meetings.)

TEMPORARY LEAVE -- **Guinevere Janes will take a leave of absence from QLC** due to health reasons, and she hopes to re-join us in the future. (PYM policies are silent on temporary leave.) This creates more vacancies on our Council. She is willing to resign if another is found to fully fill her position.

ECO-JUSTICE SPRINT AND RELATED ISSUES -- Jean-Marie P. Barch reported on the Eco-Justice Collaborative and its work over the past 25 years. A new sprint may be created during Continuing Sessions and be under the care of this Council, so we should have names ready. Zachary Dutton suggested that our Program Committee that oversees all collaboratives and sprints be ready to move forward on this.

The co-clerk clarified that this issue involves specifically coming up with names for the sprint, the utility of a sprint for this purpose, and having the co-clerks draft its mission statement.



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Robert Greene noted that in 2009 PYM issued a minute on environmental and climate issues. That action group then met with officials in DC. Alas, it was not tied to specific legislation. **He wishes to be on this new sprint** and build on lessons learned in the past, especially regarding specific legislation and local actions. It was suggested that at least one of the PYM FCNL contacts be on the sprint to stay abreast of current legislation. Actions by individuals and meetings -- as well as state and local actions -- are also important parts of this work.

REFLECTIONS ON JANUARY 30 WORKSHOP – It was a helpful session and will be followed up with the rest of the process when our three councils again meet on April 17. **We are asked to review the documents from January 30 to be ready for next month’s session.**

UNDERSTANDING OUR COUNCIL’S CHARGE – Zachary Dutton noted that some of our committees are unclear about their missions and scopes of work. Many are unclear about roles and responsibilities. Some updates may be necessary. We reviewed the QLC Handbook (p. 27 ff.) as a background document, reading it aloud and offering reflections:

- many of our sub-activities now fall under the Program Committee (is this too much for them?),
- the Program Committee is currently inventorying all of its responsibilities and will report back to us by September,
- how can QLC be more strategic and build better relationships?
- how do we set effective priorities that guide our sub-activities?
- over the years QLC has often been obsessed by crises and not been especially strategic.

We plan to re-visit this issue during our next few meetings.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION COLLABORATIVE -- **Steve has offered to represent QLC on this collaborative and will contact the Program Committee to confirm this appointment.**

PREPARING FOR CONTINUING SESSIONS NEXT WEEK AND WEEKEND – **We are all encouraged to participate.** Zachary and Jean-Marie went through the schedule on the PYM website, including the Mar. 23 Eco-Justice session, the Mar. 26 “social,” and the business sessions March 27. Most of the agenda items relate to the work of the QLC. The co-clerks warmly encourage our participation and support in these sessions. Anti-racism work revolves around making people feel included and not made to feel “other,” whatever race or social group they may be. The co-clerks will seek a balance between moving quickly and moving deeply.

We ended this Council meeting sharing joys and concerns.

These QLC minutes were read and approved on March 20, 2021.