

Business Meeting Agenda / Minutes December 29, 2016

Clerk: Blue Mitchell

Recording Clerk: Eliana Colzani

- Friends settled into silence
- The clerk read the agenda and Friends approved
- **Report from Robert on the QLC Sprint about Youth Programs**

Overall, the goal adopted by PYM leadership is to provide a new vision and structure for PYM youth programs by Spring 2017. Current pressures on programs include lowered attendance and cost pressures, while other concerns include competition with yearly and quarterly meetings, pressures on high schoolers and middle schoolers, and whether themes in current Yearly Meeting programs might not resonate broadly among the Yearly Meeting.

The process started with a visioning session, on October 1, 2016. Some 30 or so people attended. No one of the age to participate in a PYM youth program was present.

An exercise was to put oneself in various roles: Monthly Meetings, parents, young children, and Young Friends, and write hopes/needs, etc. relating to PYM youth programs, grouped by the SPICES testimonies, as well as a miscellaneous group. This exercise resulted in a large number of comments/input, which have been transcribed. Themes included broadly spiritual development, leadership development, nurturing communities and living faith in the world. The group split into sub-groups by areas of interest, and attempted to develop concrete steps that the yearly meeting could take.

The next phase was a Youth Programs Sprint. The Youth Programs sprint met by conference call three times in October and November. The Youth Programs spring received a lot of survey data from participants in youth programs, and parents. The Youth Programs Sprint explored the history of PYM Youth Programs, back to about 1920. Generally, the current form of Young Friends took shape after about 1980; prior to that, there were three Young Friends Gatherings a year, along with other activities, e.g., UN trip, intervisitation, etc. At one time, attendance of about 100 people at a gathering was common.

The Youth Programs Sprint recommended a further two phases. A second sprint which would work on obtaining additional feedback, via listening sessions and surveys, for example, and then turning the information over to a third sprint, which would be responsible for organizing the information and determining a vision, mission and governance structure. A diverse membership, with inclusion of underrepresented groups in Yearly Meeting programs, was felt to be important, as well as connecting with groups within the yearly meeting. The recommendations of the third spring would be provided to the Quaker Life Council for decision.

A friend asked if there was one specific issue that needed revisiting or if it was a general need to look at the program again. Robert replied by explaining it was a combination; some specific issues being overtime pay, low attendance, and funding. Another FAP present at the sprint offered that it was needed to structure the future of the program rather than it being unconsidered.

- **Report from Hannah on her Annual Review**

Last year, Kody and I began reporting to the Young Friends community about our Annual Reviews. Our Annual Reviews happen every November, and it's the time when staff meet with supervisors and review the last year's work and consider how we did. It's important to me and Kody that we report to Young Friends as well because we would like to be accountable not only to the supervisory structures of our employment, but also to the community we serve.

This year annual reviews of regular staff were a little more cursory than in previous years. I met with my supervisor, Zachary Dutton, Associate Secretary for Program and Religious Life, and we briefly reviewed my job responsibilities, and the goings-on of the previous year and decided that I was fulfilling them all well within the time constraints of the job. My job responsibilities as Young Friends Coordinator are:

To plan and implement the publicity, program and logistics for Young Friends gatherings that support the spiritual and personal growth of participants

To nurture and empower the spiritual grounding and full capacity of youth in the program through the program structure and through involvement in the larger PYM community.

To maintain communications with Young Friends and their parents via relevant webpages, Facebook pages and emails.

To work closely with other Youth & Young Adult Programs Coordinators to ensure mutual support and cohesiveness in the programs

To recruit, train & nurture adults who volunteer with the program

To maintain expenses within the program budget

To contribute to the Program and Religious Life team [which is the name of the department I am part of in the office].

We affirmed the goals that our department had come up with for ourselves for the upcoming year - which might sound familiar from goals that I shared in this report last year, as they are pretty much the same! Those goals are:

-Maximize consensual engagement [in other words, incorporate as many people into the program as are or could be interested and excited about it].

-Integrate work on PYM's corporate witness on Undoing Racism into the Young Friends program offerings. [One of the easy things to point to around this goal for this year is the work we have been doing that with our consideration of Native Justice and our relationship with the Quaker Sweat Lodge]

-Keep good data and use that data to inform decision-making. [You all are part of this – both the 4 question evaluations and the “Ballin’ / Not So Ballin’ evaluations that happen at the end of every gathering are part of the data that I record and reference for future decision-making!]

-Mind capacity. [This one is about making sure that staff aren't doing too much. In the last 5 years our staff has been cut in half, so there are fewer people to do the work, and leadership wants to make sure that we aren't doing more than we can reasonably sustain within our hourly limit and energy limit].

-Help implement and specify our new form of community engagement and governance. [This one is about helping the new structure that PYM launched a little over a year ago to work. It also relates to the travel to other YM's Young Friends programs that Kody and I did last Spring and bringing some of the learning from that into experimentation with how PYM Young Friends works].

This year I also took on another minor role on PYM staff of the Youth and Young Adult Programs Team Leader. I'm not going to report on that, since it's an administrative role and not as directly related to this community.

- Hannah and Kody left room
- Clerk asked for feedback on Hannah's Report

A Friend noted it would be good if there were more goals to have young friends involved in the planning of gatherings. Friends showed agreement but also noted that that is often a role of program committee. A Friend questioned if this would be beneficial to staff or not.

- **Report from Kody on his Annual Review**

Every year, Hannah and I review my performance. As the people who are most directly impacted by my job performance, I wanted to report to you so that there's some more transparency about what my perspective on my work is like, and also so Young Friends have the opportunity to comment on your experience of my work. I'm happy to share the full review with any Young Friend who would like to see it. Here are some highlights:

Things that are going well in my work:

- *I still love it!*
- *I'm proud of a lot of the aspects of program that I've worked on this year – workshops I've offered and gatherings themes that I've worked on with Hannah.*
- *I'm excited about the creation of the Young Friends Indigenous Justice Committee, and about the work I did to try to speak the truth as I understand it without being overbearing.*
- *I have fun yelling at you all, but many of you also trust me with important things in your lives, which is both rewarding and humbling.*
- *I love working with Hannah! I have even started sometimes answering her emails and phone calls!*

Goals and opportunities for growth:

- *Supporting the spreading out of emotional support/pastoral care work among FPs.*
- *Learning to drive (did it! I'm awesome!).*
- *Be a resource for the Native Justice Committee while respecting and following YF leadership.*
- *Think about ways for my work with Christian Peacemaker Teams to enrich my YF work.*

- Kody and Hannah left room
- Clerk asked for Feedback on Kody's Report

A Friend was confused about how there would be a shift of emotional support from Kody to others if Young Friends already felt comfortable with him. Friends agreed and noted the

importance of maintaining already built good relations but also pointed out the importance of making sure the person who is taking care of others is okay too.

A Friend spoke about Kody's involvement with Christian peacemakers and how that may not settle well with Friends who do not feel as connected to Christian values. A friend brought up the long relationship between Quakerism and Christianity and how the connection to Christianity that Kody brings is important. It was noted that this is enriching as it brings the original influence of Christianity.

Friends showed agreement. A friend stated that what Kody brings from the Christian group may not all religiously affiliated. It was noted that Kody is conscious of different Friends views.

- **Recording Clerk read the minutes so far and Friends approved**
- **Report from Hannah on Spring Continuing Sessions & feedback on a role for Young Friends.**

Like last year, our Young Friends Spring Gathering overlaps with Spring Continuing Sessions (which is the when the adults of the YM get together for a day of fellowship and business). This year, Spring Continuing Sessions is being planned in part by me and other staff on the Youth and Young Adult Programs team, and it's going to be radically multigenerational! Logistically what that looks like is the All Together Time will be longer, Young Friends will be offering a workshop for people to come to in the afternoons, and we're thinking about ways that youth can lead and be part of the day more. Spiritually and energetically we hope that this radically multigenerational day will mean that young people's needs and concerns will be in the center a little more than has been the case.

We're still early in the planning phases of Continuing Sessions. Next gathering, we're going to work on what the workshop we offer will look like.

Right now, I'd just like to hear some feedback to specific questions that can guide our planning more generally.

Hannah asked Young Friends:

Think about times you've interacted for at least a few minutes with adults you don't know or don't know well.

What are some elements that make those interactions go well?

Young Friends all agreed that mutual respect and willingness is essential for interactions with adults: talk to YF's like people, treat YF's as equals.

A Friend noted that prompts could be helpful to make conversation less awkward.

Agreements to make a commitment to get to know the person helps interactions.

In problem solving situations it is useful to discuss common ground first then extend conversation

What are some elements that make those interactions go poorly?

Young friends answered...

When adults attempt to act young; YF's appreciate adults showing their personality

When adults can not recognize that society is different now than it was when they were teens.

There was a large agreement for distaste of statements such as:

“I remember you when...,”

school related topics,

“Back when I was your age,”

broad and stereotypical statements and assumptions,

“I’m a cool adult”

- **Clerk recognized co-clerk Eliana to speak on behalf of graduation committee**

She explained how at the Onas gathering it was brought up that the committee was in need of a clerk. Mary’s name was brought up as a nomination; as clerk Eliana followed up with Mary and she showed interest.

- **Clerk asked if Friends approved of this nomination.**

Friends approved

- **Clerk gave report from nurture committee**

Clerk brought it to the attention of Friends that in recent years Young Friends attendance has been down. They asked for feedback on this including how Young Friends felt about this and possible ideas to get more people to attend

-Friend discussed pros and cons of large and small communities. Points being:

With a larger community, cliques are more easily created. It was also though noted that these groups are not always exclusive and offered more options for Young Friends depending on their state.

Large groups bring in more diverse views resulting in an enriched experience.

In small groups YF’s are able to know each other better

Gatherings with higher attendance bring more opportunity and options

Friends showed general consensus that they would like the YF community to grow.

-A Friend suggested... having a gathering similar to Swatara that graduated YF’s could attend to keep connected.

Another Friend suggested a day that Middle School Friends would be invited to participate in activities with YF’s to encourage more to transition programs after graduation.

- **Report from Robert on responsibilities of Adult Clerk**

The role of Adult clerk is to support the co-clerks in multiple ways, support and sit in on committees in the YF community and committees pertaining to YF in the wider Yearly Meeting, represent the views and thoughts of YF's to the wider yearly meeting, help plan gatherings, and to attend most Young Friends gatherings.

- **Clerk asked for feedback on behalf of the discernment committee for Young Friends opinions on if Robert should be considered to serve another term as adult clerk or if the committee should search for other Friendly Adult Presences to serve in addition.**

A Friend stated that they enjoyed Robert clerking and organizational skills but that the community could use new thoughts, especially with a 4-year term.

Hannah Replied to a question about age stating that the only requirement is to be over 21 but must have experience with Young Friends and be able to attend gatherings.

Friends agreed that no matter Robert's role as clerk they would like him to continue to FAP and be involved in the community.

Hannah shared with the meeting that finding an adult clerk can often be a difficult task

It was clarified that these comments did not mean Robert would not be considered for the role.

- **Minutes were read and approved.**
- **Clerk allowed the meeting to settle to silence before closing.**