

BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES 8/19/15

Recording Clerk: Sylvia Madaras (Friendly Adult Presence)

Hannah gives a brief overview of MFW for Business – we are seeking the guidance of “greater will” to discern the development of our community, raise your hand and the clerk will call you, crooked finger = logistical question, please don’t repeat what others have said, instead use “Quaker applause.”

Moment of Silence

James Duffey begins clerking as a member of Discernment Committee (then the meeting is surprised by the introduction of Onas Assistant Director Josh and his dog Mackenzie. Resettle.) Ellie M of Discernment Committee helps to introduce the following:

1. Discernment of Clerks: Deanna Long and Sara Sheffer; Liaisons: Travis Jalowiec, another TBD. These Friends leave the room.
 - a. Review: what is a clerk? Duties, expectations: stewarding YF community and running Business Meeting. What is a liaison? Duties, expectations: keeping a safe and open environment between us and older Quakers. Hannah says that the liaison position will be developing and changing as the PYM structure grows and changes. It is important for liaisons to be present at Continuing Sessions (November 7th at Westtown School this year)
 - b. Moment of Silence, invitation to speak to concerns or support of nominees.
 - c. **Nominees unanimously approved.**

Newly approved Clerk Sara Sheffer takes over Clerking.

2. Approve Agenda – agenda approved
3. Racial Affinity Spaces – Hannah explains the item: Racial Affinity Space means a location for people who identify similarly to discuss their collective experiences. The community decided not to do them at Sessions, but perhaps a greater understanding of their use would make folks feel differently. At this gathering, perhaps a Person of Color space and a White People space. It can be very helpful to White People to discern and discuss our privilege and for Persons of Color to discuss experiences. Friends discuss:
 - a. Can we say “Friends of Color”? Also, these groups can be exclusive, when one of the things we are looking for is the shared testimony of all Friends, of every color, ethnicity and background. Can we have a table at dinner for those who really want to talk about this, for Friends of all colors, rather than an affinity space? (some quaker applause)
 - b. One Friend expressed a desire to share questions among racial identities, rather than separately, expressing his concern that there is some hypocrisy to the separation. This was echoed by another Friend, who added that this is an important aspect of learning how to undo our racism. Another Friend agreed with this, and added that questions sent out to the full community are more powerful responded to than in smaller groups. She

described this as a more “full picture” approach, and expressed the wish to hear everybody.

- c. It is noted by many that it is important to be very conscientious, open and compassionate with each other as we engage with this question.
 - d. One Friend brought up the role of Worship Sharing as a space for processing – how would affinity-group processing be different than this?
 - e. Clerk offered the following sense of the meeting: **we do not want racial affinity groups but would like to set a meal-based conversation space for all affinities in order to process further and in a small group.** Friends approved.
4. Consequences and Guidelines – Young Friends decided at the Fall Gathering that we would address the way consequences to guideline infractions are handled when Guidelines Discernment was complete. The time has come! Hannah discussed the consequences framework that she has been using thus far: consequences should be proportional to actions and offer a way for the individual to make it up to the community, consequences should be preventative somewhat punitive so that it is clearly not encouraged that it happen again, should offer an opportunity for reflection, care and personal growth, offer a way back into trust and integrity with community. Finally, consequences should protect the well-being of the community. Consequences are developed in conversation with the individual in question. In the past these have included community service, parental notification, suspension, letter of apology, and others. **Is that the framework we want? If not, the invitation to create a community to change it.**
- a. One Friend offers that at her camp, one common consequence is a janitorial job. She finds this helpful because it is actively reparative for the community. Some Quaker applause.
 - b. One Friend offered that if somebody breaches the guidelines, we might form a reflection committee to address the individual: not a critique, but rather a check-in with guidance and care as its main goal.
 - c. It is recognized that there are varying levels of severity in guidelines/ consequences. **Friends suggest that more clarity be offered when Hannah reads the guidelines. “When you break this guideline, a common consequence might be _____”**
 - d. One Friend: “Friend speaks my mind.” Nebulous is okay, but a clearer sense of scale might be helpful when first introducing guidelines.
 - e. One Friend: One good thing about this is the check-in aspect. One important thing is that you should feel ashamed if you do something hurtful that violates the trust of the community. It is important that we are clear that if trust is broken, that is a serious concern. On the levels of consequence idea: there have been a lot of violations. Have they really been working? Because the breaches continue to happen, and perhaps the janitorial/public consequence should be larger.
 - f. It appears that further discussion is needed, the clerk offers.

- g. Two Friends also agree, and one adds that every rule and breach has a different type of consequence, and a fluidity in the consequence aspect of this process is very important. Consequences are a conversation, not a finite decision, and every violation is its own discussion. Honesty is also important, she adds. Owning up to your mistakes, and the welcoming of the individual back into the community are both very important parts of the process, and parts we should not forget. Justice and discipline should always be reparative.
 - h. One Friend discusses her own experience of violating a guideline. She expresses that the current consequences process is deeply emotional, and that repairing trust is hard work. She expresses that more severity could be deeply detrimental. Her experience of the consequences are that they work, they are Quakerly, they are hard, and they maintain the community in a healthy and necessary way.
 - i. **The clerk notes that there should be a committee to discuss levels of guideline/consequence.** The following friends volunteer: Ellie Mumma, Raven, Christian, James D, Travis R, Mary, Madi
5. Assigning Committees
- a. Should we have an Epistle Committee? Hannah discusses the meaning of epistle: old-fashioned word for “letter.” Would we like to write our own epistle related to racism given the minute PYM has recently written? Are Young Friends in support of writing this epistle at this gathering?
 - i. One Friend perhaps an epistle is not yet necessary.
 - ii. One Friend offers that older friends are very responsive to us right now. While an epistle might sound dumb/ redundant, they are listening to us right now! Older people listen to written words, and have recently become infatuated with the idea that young people actually have brains. They are actually listening to us, and this is one of the best ways they hear.
 - iii. One Friend offers that the yearly meeting epistle is what the yearly meeting thinks. A YF epistle would be what we think. “If we have something to say, it makes sense to say it.”
 - iv. One Friend is highly in support of this committee, but expresses the concern for time: do we have time for this?
 - v. Hannah offers that the epistle could be written during the gathering. One Friend asks clarifying question: can this committee be at a different time, so that we have time to work on it if we’re on other committees? It depends, answers Hannah. We can also try free-time and meals if committee time does not offer enough time:
 - vi. **Friends approve the creation of an epistle committee for this gathering. The members are: Jess, Henry, Tenaja, Lily BG, Ian are on the epistle committee**

- b. PROGRAM COMMITTEE, DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE, NURTURING COMMITTEE, GRADUATION COMMITTEE, OUTREACH COMMITTEE (recently inactive—is this the epistle committee?)
 - i. Hannah clarifies that during lunch, discernment of permanurts is happening, and so that time slot is not open to all, but the nurturing committee is open to all during the committee meeting time. Also, Epistle and Consequence need to find an alternative time to meet.
 - ii. Program: Henry, Raven, Christian, Aaron, and James D as discernment
 - iii. Discernment: James, Ellie, Dmitri
 - iv. Nurturing: Lili Brandt Moses, Jess, Tenaja, Shea, Travis and Elli on nurturing as discernment
 - v. Graduation: Lily BL, Ian, Madi/ Fred/ Tyler, Mary, Jacob, Evie, Dmitri
- 6. Guidelines Sign-off
 - a. Hannah explains sending guidelines to parents: Our plan is to send out YF guidelines before the gathering, so that we can all say that we have read and agreed to these guidelines before arriving. Since we have finished the guidelines discernment and they are all YF created, Hannah feels good about sending these guidelines out in advance. This will make the guidelines part of the intro much shorter, we hope.
 - b. **Approved.**
- 7. The minutes were read back and approved.