

Minutes of the Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business  
held December 11, 2005

1. The meeting opened with a period of silent worship. The clerk read the following passage out of the silence:

Query number 2 from NYYM Advices and Queries: "Do we make opportunity in our daily lives for communion with God and the opening of our hearts to the Christ Within? Are we thankful for each day as an opportunity for a new adventure of life with God?"

2. Those present were Robin Alpern, Bowen Alpern, William Seltzer, Ruth Bryan, Ronald Rieder, Virginia Blanford, Alice Clague, Susan Weisfeld, Lucinda Antrim, Anne Wright, Norma Ellis and Mary Eagleson.

3. Ruth Bryan reported for the naming committee:

The following roster is submitted for approval:

Class Nominees

2006 John Bryant and Elizabeth Schutt

2007 Sue Weisfeld and William Seltzer

2008 Alan McKenney and Lea Cullen

Eunice Laughlin and Robin Alpern have indicated that they might be willing to serve starting in 2007.

The report was accepted and the roster was approved.

4. The clerk reported for the Ministry and Worship committee that we will begin a series of study sessions using the Friends General Conference materials titled "Quakerism 101". Next Sunday (December 18) a preliminary gathering will be held, during which those interested in participation will decide on a schedule which suits them.

5. Alice Clague gave the treasurer's report, then spoke briefly about one table in the proposed 2006 budget.

First, the response to the Finance Committee's appeal via the listserv last month was very encouraging, bringing contributions this year to approximately the same level as they were at this time last year. Second, many Friends have not yet submitted their expenses to the treasurer, so that it appears that we have underspent the budget by a greater amount than is actually the case. She appealed to Friends to submit their bills now. In discussion of the Meeting's liquid assets, she noted that the stock market is higher this year than last, leading to an apparent increase of \$3,000.

6. William Seltzer presented the proposed budget for 2006, consisting of three tables: the projected

meeting income, the proposed operating budget, and operating budget balances for 2004, 2005 and projected 2006. He noted that total income could increase, in part because the nursery school will be making a larger contribution than before, and in part because interest rates are higher. The projected expenses are approximately the same as last year. The budget is being presented for information only, and will be presented for approval next month.

7. Finance Committee asked that the Treasurer be authorized to pay bills in 2006 until the budget for that year is approved. This was approved.

8. William Seltzer read a letter from Philip Martin, an attender, resigning from the Finance Committee. He expressed regret that his family did not share his enthusiasm for Quakerism, but because he feels that the family should worship together at another church, he will no longer be able to serve on the committee.

9. Ronald Rieder announced from the Clearness and Counsel Committee that they are investigating the possibility of setting up a temporary sign on First Days which will say "Quaker Meeting Today" and the time (11:00 or 10:00) of the meeting. The committee invited comments. The Building and Grounds committee is working on replacing our permanent sign as well, and the two committees will consult each other on the process.

10. Virginia Blanford reported on a meeting with representatives from M'Vakshe Derekh:

As directed by the Meeting, Norma Ellis and Susan Weisfeld, with Alice Clague and Virginia Blanford as representatives from the Meeting Renovations Committee, met with Iris Farber, President, and Joe and Harriet Fievel from Congregation M'Vakshe Derekh on 11/19/2005. Bryan Kennedy was unable to attend

The purpose of the meeting was to share concerns and discuss possible solutions primarily about the physical plant of the Meeting House, and much was accomplished. Discussion centered around the state of the kitchen, storage throughout the building but especially in the upstairs foyer and library, and the need for ongoing communication between the two groups.

Those who attended this meeting urge that the Meeting take the following actions as a result:

Appoint a small group-perhaps the Building Liaison, a member of the B&G Committee, and the Clerk-to schedule regular meetings with the Congregation's president, perhaps once a quarter, or twice a year.

Talk with Iris about the need for the Congregation to clear purchases of large furniture that needs to be stored upstairs before moving forward with these. (Two large lecterns have been added to the Congregation's furniture for services in the last year or so.)

Respond to Iris Farber's intent to put a spiral notebook on top of the mailboxes in the downstairs hall for more frequent notes. Do we think this is a good idea? If so, someone needs to be selected to read the notebook regularly and respond to concerns.

The meeting accepted the report and appointed the building liaison person and the clerk to schedule meetings with M'Vaksche Derekh representatives on a regular basis.

11. Virginia Blanford presented the following report from the Renovations Committee

1. The workday sign-up has resulted in completion of many tasks; windows have been washed, the glass-fronted cabinets have been cleared out; much work has been done outside. Others have committed to completing more tasks this afternoon and in the future.
2. In January, the Committee hopes to present a proposal to the Meeting to create a masterplan that will both address current needs (storage, a more efficient kitchen, a more clearly defined entrance) and guide future possible renovations. The plan will also provide an evaluation of "infrastructure" (roof, wiring, heating, windows, etc.) and create a maintenance guide for the Meeting. Curtis Williams urged the Meeting to create such a plan some ten years ago, and we feel his suggestion remains cogent.
3. The Committee has requested proposals from three architects for creating the masterplan. These architects are:
  - a. Allen Ross, who grew up in this Meeting and has done work in the meetinghouse on previous occasions;
  - b. Mitchell Koch, who was architect for the recent renovations at Purchase meetinghouse; and
  - c. Russell Davidson, whose firm has done extensive work for religious institutions of all kinds throughout Westchester and who was recommended by Hitchcock Memorial Church.

A copy of the Request for Proposals is available from the Committee and has been submitted to the Clerk of the Meeting.

4. Based on initial responses from these architects, the Committee estimates that the creation of such a plan-a process that will take some six months and will involve extensive interaction between the Meeting and the architect selected-will cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000. The Committee hopes that the 2006 budget will include a sum of this size from the Building Reserve Fund to be used for this purpose should the Meeting approve a proposal submitted by the Committee.
5. Based on prior approvals from the Meeting, a handyman has been engaged to make minor interim repairs to the kitchen, including fixing some drawers and replacing the sink and surrounding countertop. This work will take place between Christmas and New Year's, when the Nursery School is on break..
6. The committee selected Virginia Blanford as clerk.

Thomas Abernathy, Virginia Blanford, Alice Clague, Mary Eagleson, Olivia Hewitt, Anne Wright

The meeting accepted the report.

12. Mary Eagleson reported for Peace and Social Concerns committee that it recommends sending a contribution to Friends United Meeting, accompanied by a letter containing the following text:

“Scarsdale Friends Meeting is aware of its connection to Friends United Meeting through New York Yearly Meeting. It would like to be able to celebrate that connection. However, Scarsdale Friends are deeply troubled by FUM’s hiring policy, viewing it as a human restriction on the freedom of the Spirit to speak through anyone it chooses. We are aware that there are passages in Scripture which would appear to sanction homophobia, as there are passages which would appear to sanction slavery. We believe the Spirit is alive in the world, teaching new lessons on the universality of Love.

We understand that the process of discerning new Revelation is a slow one and that FUM cannot amend its hiring policy until its constituent yearly meetings are in unity on this step. We commend the initiatives being undertaken within FUM to promote dialogue and understanding across yearly meeting boundaries.

We ask FUM to accept our nominal contribution with the same restrictions placed by Baltimore Yearly Meeting on its 2005 contribution: ‘We ask that these funds be used solely to fund a new FUM program of yearly meeting intervisitation, beginning with North American Yearly Meetings. We ask that they not be used for administrative fees or FUM overhead costs, but only for the direct costs of the intervisitation program. Funds contributed by BYM may be used for the travel expenses of Friends among the Yearly Meetings and the costs of one or more conferences related to understanding gender and sexual diversity.’

We ask FUM to respect the wishes of individual Scarsdale Friends who may express a desire that their contributions carry the same restrictions.”

This was approved.

13. We approved sending the request that New York Yearly Meeting consider attaching similar restrictions to its contribution to FUM to Purchase Quarter.

14. The committee will continue to work on our concern about Friends United Meeting’s portrayal of itself as “evangelical”.

15. Bowen Alpern announced that he is on a subcommittee of the NYYM Coordinating Committee on Ministry and Counsel which has planned a series of Powell House weekends on Drawing Out Gifts. He asked individuals in the meeting seriously to consider attending the workshops and to suggest the names of others who should be encouraged to attend.

16. Alice Clague announced for Ministry and Worship that it is working on our retreat on

Advancement, to be led by Jane Berger. Saturday, March 18 was suggested as the date on which the greatest number of those on the planning committee could attend. The meeting approved setting that date.

17. Clearness and Counsel and Ministry and Worship were asked to appoint members of those committees to prepare a first draft of our state of the meeting report for 2005.

18. The next meeting for worship with a concern for business is scheduled for January 8, 2006.