

**Minutes of the Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
Asheville Friends Meeting
Fourth Month 19, 2009**

Clerk: Barbara Esther

Co-Recording Clerk: Jen Rhode

Present: Gary Briggs, Bobby Carter, Jim Cavener, Kristi Gjelfriend, Gjeorge Gjelfriend, Joy Gossett, Rylin Hansen, Pat Johnson, Katherine Kowal, Steve Livingston, Laura Maynard, Rusty Maynard, Phil Neal, Kitti Reynolds, Alan Robinson.

Opening worship began at 12:05 p.m. with silence.

Reading:

The Prophet reported that God said,
“I am not contained in the container of high and low.
I am not contained in the earth nor in all the heavens.
But I am contained in the heart of My faithful servant.
How wonderful! If you seek Me, seek Me there.”

From *Rumi - A Spiritual Treasury*
Compiled by Juliet Mabey

Before approving the Agenda, we agreed to refer the matter of further assistance for Stephanie Gossett to the Ministry & Council Committee. After that, the agenda was approved.

The approval of the Minutes of Third Month Meeting for Business was tabled until fifth month, as those Minutes were only recently posted to our website.

Finance Report

Pat Johnson

The full Finance Report is pasted below and was accepted as presented.

Pat Johnson noted that the family of Alice Brown gave a \$14,000 unrestricted bequest to the Meeting, and that the Meeting will need to decide how to use this generous donation. The clerk asked whether attendees had ideas about how these funds might be disbursed. One Friend recalled Alice’s habit of seeing an immediate Meeting need and using her funds to take care of that. Another Friend said that he felt this was not the best time to decide on ways to spend the fund, as there were no urgent monetary needs. He recommended that the Ministry & Council and Finance Committees decide on fund dispersal at a later date. One Friend commented that Alice had always been generous in underwriting Friends’ travel, and he suggested that disbursing funds for such needs would be consistent with Alice’s tradition. Katherine Kowal, clerk of Ministry and Counsel Committee, concurred this was not the time for decisions but was a good time for brainstorming; she mentioned the possibility of using the monies to replenish our

Young Friends' funds. The clerk asked that Friends let Ministry & Council or Finance Committees know of further ideas to be considered.

A Friend asked for clarification about the Scholarship Fund. The line item in the budget was then pointed out.

The clerk asked how funds for the Junior Business Meeting should be disbursed, as this group had not been active for several years. A Friend asked for the possibilities of a Junior Business Meeting in the future. The clerk explained that it depended on the age of the Meeting's young participants, and that she anticipated a delay of several years before a Junior Business Meeting would be reactivated. She then suggested that the Religious Education Committee advise us about this. Joy Gossett, a member of that committee, said that, in the past, Junior Business Meeting expressed interest in disbursing these funds, but that such action had just not yet happened.

MINUTE #1: Friends approved the following: The Meeting asks the Religious Education Committee to advise it about disbursing Junior Business Meeting funds, including Humane Society, Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR), and American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Iraq kit monies.

		Jan 1 - Apr 14, 09	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense					
	Income				
	4000 · Contribution Income				
	4010 · Unrestricted	1,501.01	0.00	1,501.01	100.0%
	4000 · Contribution Income - Other	0.00	20,270.00	-20,270.00	0.0%
	Total 4000 · Contribution Income	1,501.01	20,270.00	-18,768.99	7.41%
	7010 · Interest Income	41.91	700.00	-658.09	5.99%
	Rental Income	1,445.00	3,900.00	-2,455.00	37.05%
	Total Income	2,987.92	24,870.00	-21,882.08	12.01%
	Gross Profit	2,987.92	24,870.00	-21,882.08	12.01%
	Expense				
	Transfers TO Other Funds**				
	M&C Needs Fund Transfer**	0.00	300.00	-300.00	0.0%
	Scholarship Fund Transfer**	0.00	200.00	-200.00	0.0%
	Transfer to H&G reserves**	0.00	2,000.00	-2,000.00	0.0%
	Total Transfers TO Other Funds**	0.00	2,500.00	-2,500.00	0.0%
	Meeting House				
	House and Grounds				
	Supplies	31.92	0.00	31.92	100.0%
	Cleaning	137.50	0.00	137.50	100.0%
	Maintenance	45.00	0.00	45.00	100.0%
	House and Grounds – Other	0.00	3,000.00	-3,000.00	0.0%

			Total House and Grounds	214.42	3,000.00	-2,785.58	7.15%
			6180 · Insurance				
			Property/Casualty	0.00	2,500.00	-2,500.00	0.0%
			Worker's Comp	0.00	800.00	-800.00	0.0%
			Total 6180 · Insurance	0.00	3,300.00	-3,300.00	0.0%
			6390 · Utilities				
			Electric	154.35	0.00	154.35	100.0%
			Gas	696.23	0.00	696.23	100.0%
			6340 · Telephone	215.98	0.00	215.98	100.0%
			6410 · Water	89.46	0.00	89.46	100.0%
			6390 · Utilities – Other	0.00	2,700.00	-2,700.00	0.0%
			Total 6390 · Utilities	1,156.02	2,700.00	-1,543.98	42.82%
			Total Meeting House	1,370.44	9,000.00	-7,629.56	15.23%
			Meeting Support				
			Hospitality Committee	18.00	150.00	-132.00	12.0%
			Pastoral Care Committee	0.00	120.00	-120.00	0.0%
			Communications Committee	285.00	400.00	-115.00	71.25%
			Advertising				
			Friends Journal	80.00	0.00	80.00	100.0%
			Advertising – Other	0.00	100.00	-100.00	0.0%
			Total Advertising	80.00	100.00	-20.00	80.0%
			Finance Committee	0.00	90.00	-90.00	0.0%
			Library	0.00	300.00	-300.00	0.0%
			Ministry and Counsel Committee	0.00	50.00	-50.00	0.0%
			6240 · Miscellaneous				
			6120 · Bank Service Charges	0.00	150.00	-150.00	0.0%
			Office Supplies	0.00	100.00	-100.00	0.0%
			6240 · Miscellaneous – Other	0.00	500.00	-500.00	0.0%
			Total 6240 · Miscellaneous	0.00	750.00	-750.00	0.0%
			6560 · Payroll Expenses	0.00	200.00	-200.00	0.0%
			Religious Education Committee				
			Childcare	0.00	900.00	-900.00	0.0%
			First Day School	0.00	900.00	-900.00	0.0%
			SAYF	0.00	400.00	-400.00	0.0%
			Total Religious Education Committee	0.00	2,200.00	-2,200.00	0.0%
			Spiritual Enrichment Committee	0.00	200.00	-200.00	0.0%
			Total Meeting Support	383.00	4,560.00	-4,177.00	8.4%
			Outreach				
			6140 · General Outreach	0.00	2,500.00	-2,500.00	0.0%
			Peace and Earth Committee				
			Projects	0.00	300.00	-300.00	0.0%

			Total Peace and Earth Committee	0.00	300.00	-300.00	0.0%
			Quaker Outreach	0.00	2,500.00	-2,500.00	0.0%
			SAYMA Dues	0.00	3,510.00	-3,510.00	0.0%
			Total Outreach	0.00	8,810.00	-8,810.00	0.0%
			Total Expense	1,753.44	24,870.00	-23,116.56	7.05%
			Net Ordinary Income	1,234.48	0.00	1,234.48	100.0%
			Net Income	1,234.48		1,234.48	

Committee Reports

Peace and Earth Committee

Kitti Reynolds

Next First Day (Sunday, 26 April) will be the annual Earth Day celebration at All Souls Church in Biltmore Village. Peace & Earth will provide a Friendly Adult Presence for this. Kitti plans to display a Friends' banner at the event.

The new North Carolina committee to abolish to the death penalty asked for our endorsement. Rob Waskom has attended this group's organizational meetings, and Peace & Earth has endorsed its activities.

Peace & Earth sent letters to our congressional representatives about:

- a national bill delaying deportation of Haitian refugees
- co-sponsorship of a North Carolina House Bill (the Racial Justice Act), supporting racial parity in sentencing

Peace & Earth also noted that they should not have used meeting letterhead for these letters, as the matters were not put before the Business Meeting for approval prior to being sent.

A Friend said she was pleased to know how active the Peace & Earth Committee had been. She said that, when there was time, that bringing these issues to the Business Meeting for approval would lend stronger support to such issues. Another Friend noted that we were adding a link to the website so that individuals in the Meeting could also write their own letters in support of these issues.

The Peace and Earth Committee Report was accepted as presented.

Barbara Esther noted that a group of people were leaving on Monday, 20 April at 7 a.m. from the Earth Fare parking lot to demonstrate against the Cliffside Coal Power Plant. She wanted to ensure that the Meeting was aware of this.

Phil Neal asked for time to speak against the use of fossil fuels and for the development of alternate energy sources. He noted that two potential sources of fuel were: Zero Point Energy (which could eliminate the need for nuclear and fossil fuels), and hydrogen-

powered engines (with only water as a waste product). He asked that Friends pay attention to the development of these two sources of energy, both of which could hasten our ability to divorce our energy needs from fossil fuel production.

Other

A Friend asked if Barbara had received an emailed note from Neftali Fernández requesting a Clearness Committee for Membership. Neftali expressed no preference regarding members of this committee. It was noted that letters requesting clearness committees were typically brought directly before the business meeting. This Friend said that he explained the importance of being familiar with our community when Neftali asked him about membership after only two weeks of attendance. The clerk asked for volunteers willing to serve on a clearness committee.

Minute #2 – Friends approved that Jim Cavener, Gjeorge Gjelfriend, Kristi Gjelfriend, Phil Neal, and Jen Rhode serve on the clearness committee. Steve Livingston offered to convene this clearness committee.

The clerk also noted that we have received a second request for membership clearness. Marcos Morales, who lives in the Dominican Republic and has been in a worship group with Elizabeth Roebing. He has requested a clearness committee for membership in the Religious Society of Friends, perhaps through our Meeting. We will have a chance to meet with him when he comes to North Carolina with Elizabeth, to attend SAYMA Yearly Meeting in June. Barbara received a letter from Marcos and responded to him that we would take this issue up in our next meeting of the Ministry and Council Committee.

One Friend expressed his not feeling easy about offering membership to those with whom we, as a Meeting, were not yet familiar. Several Friends reminded us that the clearness committee would take on the responsibility of discernment rather than rubber-stamping all membership requests. The clerk asked that we look with new eyes on all who approach the Meeting for clearness, and reiterated that we should trust the clearness process. A Friend noted that we have agreed, in the past, that Meeting membership meant that you were under the care of the Meeting, and that each member holds the meeting under his or her care. Others noted that one challenge to our Meeting was lack of geographic closeness and the resultant intimacy of community.

Another Friend expressed a concern that he noted changes in the numbers of attendees and demographics of the Meeting over the time that he had been attending. He said there had been times when he had felt unwelcome in the Meeting. He asked that we examine the reasons someone might feel unwelcome, and think about how our behaviors could create an atmosphere encouraging one-time attendees to come back.

One Friend, reacting to that message, said that the message had opened up a conversation that this Meeting needed to have, but that this conversation would take months rather than hours to complete. He noted that Quaker Quest (which he would learn about in Blacksburg next month) might be one development to help with Meeting vitality. He

further recommended that this concern be taken to SAYMA, and that we might request visitation from Celo, Brevard, and Swannanoa Meetings for their recommendations for fostering vitality. Another Friend pointed out that we could also request this from more distant meetings or from a Quaker consultant, such as Mary Anne Downing, who will be here in October; or from members who do not attend meeting. The clerk said that she hoped we could determine what we could do to make positive improvements, rather than focusing on what behaviors we needed to avoid. She said that, as had been suggested, it was important for each person to think of what he or she could do.

It was proposed that we create a group to discuss this in-depth. It was noted that there were 65 individuals who considered themselves active members of our community, even though some of them do not attend meeting, when they were contacted about inclusion in the meeting directory. Sentiment was expressed noting that it was more important to maintain integrity in our discernment process than to increase numbers of persons or avoid struggles.

The clerk thanked those who brought this concern before today's business meeting. She urged us to hold these thoughts in our hearts so that we could move forward in positive ways. She noted that the Nominating Committee would soon be asking Friends to discern new roles for involvement in the meeting, and that now was a good time to consider what we might do to create a more vibrant Meeting, regardless of size.

Closing Worship

The business meeting ended with silent worship at 1:47 p.m. to meet again, as way opens, on Fifth Month 10, 2009.