

Minutes of the Called Meeting for Worship for the Purpose of Business  
Eighth Month 23, 2009

Clerk & recorder: Barbara Esther

Queries for consideration:

What elements in our first day schedule are of vital importance to our meeting & what elements would we be willing to surrender?

What is my commitment to this meeting in terms of time, talent, and treasure?

What is best for the children of the meeting?

Present: Steve Livingston, Edie Patrick, Kristi Gjelfriend, George Gjelfriend, Rusty Maynard, Joy Gossett, Frank Roberts, Tomas Edsel, Jim Cavener, Alan Robinson, Gary Briggs, Phil Neal, Martha Hansen, Raelin Hansen, Bobby Carter, Adrienne Weir, Paola Weir-Villatoro, Robin Wells, Barbara Esther.

Robin Wells presented an overview of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on First Day Schedule and two options to be considered in our meeting today. The first option begins at 9:30 with singing, ends at 11:30 or at 1:30, when there is either business meeting or spiritual enrichment for adults. The second option begins at 9:30 with meeting for business or spiritual enrichment and ends at 2:30 on some First Days, with worship scheduled from 11:00 to 12:00. In both options First Day School takes place from fifteen minutes after the beginning of meeting for worship and runs for an hour.

Friends asked why we were considering the change in schedule. A member of the committee reminded us of the length of time that we had tried the present schedule (three years) and the shrinking of the size of our First Day School and attendance in general.

It was noted that we need to meet the needs of both adults and children during the worship hour and throughout First Days. Robin Wells had already prepared a schedule for First Day School lessons for the year with a tentative outline of content. It was noted that having many teachers available would allow for all to attend worship with some regularity. The question of singing in a different room was also brought up, which would allow for others to hold the space in the worship room beginning at 9:30.

One parent pointed out that having a variety of teachers could be seen as an extension of our community-building.

The proposed schedules were purposely kept as early as possible to allow meeting activities to end early enough for Friends to participate in afternoon activities outside of the meeting. Another Friend pointed out that there is no reason not to start our activities as early as 9:00. This Friend also saw no reason to micro schedule the singing time and space.

Some Friends unable to attend today's meeting prefer 10 o'clock because of work schedules or afternoon activities. It was noted that Sandwich Sunday could be earlier in either option than the options show. It was also suggested that the sharing of joys and sorrows might be included in the hour of worship rather than to follow the hour allotted for worship. Families not present in the called meeting expressed their preference for an early (10 o'clock) meeting for worship/First Day school.

The question of the length of our business meeting was brought up for consideration. Are we setting a goal to shorten the time we spend on our meetings for worship for the conduct of business?

This Friend pointed out that we are trying to serve two distinct communities: first, the Friends who are here today, and those who are already invested in the meeting and willing to serve it; and secondly, the Friends who are not here, and who may be more in need of the service of the meeting than they are able or willing to serve the meeting at this time.

We once tried to conduct business before the worship hour with a continuation of business meeting after worship. At that time the attendance at the early session was low. The percentage of regular attenders at our meetings for worship that also attend business meetings has been steady, according to this Friend.

It was noted that having a variety of adult enrichment activities available to Friends, can result in our having a more vibrant meeting, perhaps increasing the attendance in both worship and business meetings.

One Friend shared his experience in another meeting which had a large population of older Friends. In that meeting many of the Friends had to return for their midday meal or not have a meal that day. This need convinced the meeting to run the business meetings within a time frame, holding over matters that were not seasoned rather than wasting time on discussion when more seasoning was needed. Care was taken to conduct the meetings in a worshipful way, but also in a timely way. Can we truly attend to our business for longer than 90 minutes?

A Friend cautioned us not to disregard the needs and wishes of those not present today, as there are longstanding members who are unable to be with us today, but who, nevertheless are a vital part of the meeting.

We discussed the need for food, especially for the children, when there is an extended morning with activities that go on into the afternoon.

One Friend noticed a lack of intergenerational activities in the suggested schedule, which for the last two years provided opportunity for Friends to get to know each other across the generations. The committee had discussed this, but wants to coordinate the intergenerational activities with the Spiritual Enrichment Committee.

One Friend shared her experience in a workshop which described our western tendency to arrange time, and fill that time; whereas in other cultures, the time is allowed to fill itself.

Discipline will be called for in limiting business meeting time, on the part of the clerk as well as all other participants, with proper preparation being key to success. It appeals to several Friends to have less time constraint by having worship before other activities (more organic). Having food each week also appeals to many Friends.

**Minute #1: Friends approved adopting the A option beginning on September 13, 2009. On that First Day we will have singing at 9:30 until 9:50, worship at 10:00 and sharing of joys and sorrows at 11:00 followed by a time of fellowship and snacks and ending with a Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business.**

The Ad Hoc Committee will report on the progress and success of the meeting schedule in our November meeting for business.