

**Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
Eleventh Month 8, 2009**

Clerk: Katherine Kowal

Recording Clerk: Jennifer Rhode Ward

Present: Gary Briggs, Bobby Carter, Jim Cavener, David Clements, Tom Edelston, Barbara Esther, Ellen Freotte, George Gjelfriend, Kristi Gjelfriend, Joy Gossett, Rylin Hansen, Pat Johnson, Steve Livingston, Laura Maynard, Phil Neal, Margaret Normile, Edie Patrick, Kitti Reynolds, Alan Robinson, Adrienne Weir

Worship

Reading

“When we focus on our oneness and unity in the love that is God, it is tempting to believe that we will all live happily ever after together, with never an unkind word or misunderstanding, much less legitimate complaints, anger, or real nastiness. The challenge, of course, is to hold up and live out the wisdom while acknowledging and accepting the reality of our own flawed humanness and that of those we live with.”

Patricia Loring
Listening Spirituality

Minutes of Ninth and Tenth Months

Minutes from Ninth Month were approved as posted.

Minutes from Tenth Month were revised to note that 2004-2007 MFB minutes are indeed available. The following will be added to the Tenth Month minutes: [Eleventh Month 8, 2009. It was subsequently determined that the 2004-2007 minutes are posted on the AFM website]. Tenth Month minutes were approved with this change.

Financial Reports

Pat Johnson

Current income is \$4484.64 short of planned annual expenditures.

A Friend asked for clarification, asking if committees had underspent their budgets (which would further balance this). Pat answered that committees had indeed not spent all planned monies. Adrienne pointed out that we have expended 63.5% of what we intend to spend, and brought in 43% of what we hoped to bring in. She anticipates that SAYF will request further funds to cover retreat-related expenditures. David pointed out that the deficit was actually greater than \$4484.64 if committee underspending was taken into consideration, and that we might end up with a deficit at the end of the year. David asked that Friends able to make further contributions identify themselves to the Finance Committee. Adrienne pointed out that some annual contributions had already been received.

The Finance Committee’s report was accepted as presented.

Committee Reports

Ministry and Counsel Committee

Kristi Gjelfriend

[link to recommended requirements for non-Member to serve on Ministry and Counsel](#)

A Friend asked how these requirements would be determined. These would be left to the discernment of Nominating Committee. Another Friend noted that all approvals would come before Meeting for Business for approval, per usual procedure. A Friend asked for clarification of “well-seasoned Friend”, and point (a) in the M&C Committee Report was subsequently reworded.

A Friend commended the committee on its work with a difficult and complex situation, but did not feel ready to give approval of anything at this MFB. He asked that all have time to look over a printed copy of M&C recommendations (sent over email, distributed at Meeting, or posted on the website) for seasoning prior to making a final decision. A Friend noted that these words would be posted in the Eleventh Month minutes, concerns could be posed in the interim, and that decisions might be made in the Twelfth Month MFB.

Another Friend noted that, given the Nominating Committee procedure, the wording of the general guideline was less important. Kristi noted that M&C recommendations did not change any AFM policies. Another Friend said that he felt that rigorous attention to the precise wording of documents was important in this instance. A member of M&C noted that the committee spent two months discussing wording prior to bringing the matter to MFB.

A Friend noted that the recommendations would be more clear if the term “friend/Friend” was removed. He asked that policies be put in writing and distributed to the Meeting before any decision was made.

Nominating Committee

George Gjelfriend

[link to Nominating Committee report](#)

The nominations for communications committee were withdrawn when it was realized the nominating committee had not had a chance to meet and approve them. The Nominating Committee will meet to discuss nominations prior to bringing them forward at next month’s Meeting for Business.

The Clerk asked that Nominating Committee also discuss the presence or absence of nominees during their approval during Meeting for Business. A Friend noted that, if we cannot say what we need to say in a loving manner before the entire Meeting, that is a problem. She asked that candidates be given the option to leave the room but not be asked to do so. A Friend asked that apologies be made to the candidates whose names were brought forward for nomination, and that we note that the issues were procedural, not personal.

SAYMA Faith and Practice Revision

Barbara Esther

Approved sections of the original SAYMA document were read aloud by Barbara to provide context for the revisions.

[link to recommended revisions](#)

MINUTE: The proposed recommendations of the SAYMA Committee were approved as amended.

Communications Committee

Steve Livingston

[link to discussion of recommendation regarding posting of committee reports](#)

The Communications Committee recommended that reports be posted as appendices to the Meeting for

Business minutes. These reports would also be hyperlinked within the minutes such that users could navigate to these items. The Communications Committee noted that they would meet again prior to the next Meeting for Business. One Friend asked that the Communications Committee, Clerk, and Recording Clerk work together to make this decision.

Another Friend asked that paper versions of the Minutes be left in the foyer. Barbara Esther volunteered to do this if no one on Communications Committee was able to do this.

MINUTE: Those present approved that this new format (appended committee reports, rather than committee reports pasted into the minutes) be undertaken.

[link to recommended public service announcements](#)

A Friend asked if “seeing that of God within all” and “continuous revelation” could be included in the statement; she felt those were important distinguishing traits of Quakers. Two opposing views expressed by those present noted that the public could be misled to feel that Friends were either Christocentric or divorced from any Christian tradition; Steve noted that the committee also expressed these two views. Another Friend agreed that reference to the process of “continuous revelation” was important, and she asked that the beginning of the paragraph be re-phrased because “worship of the divine” could be misleading. A Friend asked that the phrases be reworded to refer to experiential rather than intellectual processes. One Friend suggested that this would be a good topic for second hour discussion. The phrase “welcoming congregation” might also be considered as it is particularly meaningful to GLBTQ individuals. Steve plans to take today’s feedback to the Communications Committee for discussion prior to the next Business Meeting.

Finance Committee

David Clements

[link to Finance Committee report](#)

The Communications Committee will recommend that the Meeting House discontinue its subscription to internet access, to save monies. This committee decided in 2007 that the Meeting House computer would be a repository for all information related to the Meeting. Adrienne clarified that she cannot do her committee work under the current conditions. While she would prefer to work at the Meeting House, she recognizes that this would be the most expensive option. A Friend suggested storing this information on a disk, but David said that this could be problematic because of QuickBooks’ proprietary nature. Those present encouraged the Finance Committee to make the decision that was best for them.

Peace and Earth Committee

Kitti Reynolds

[link to Peace and Earth report](#)

The Peace and Earth Committee Report was accepted as given.

Other

The Ad Hoc Committee for Holiday Planning suggested a late afternoon/early evening “Celebration, Singing, and Service” gathering on Saturday, December 19th. They are considering a project for AFSC as well as one to make edible treats for the birds. Food, storytelling, and singing would follow. No further planning has been

done as yet, and suggestions to committee members are welcome. Please contact Barbara Esther, Kristi Gjelfriend, or Adrienne Weir with your suggestions.

On November 14th at 7:30 p.m., Womensong will present a concert at the UU Church.

Katherine has had a request that the agenda be posted on the website by the Friday before Business Meeting. She asked that committee clerks get items to them by Wednesdays before Meeting for Business.

Closing Worship

TEXT OF COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ministry and Counsel

At the September MFB the Nominating Committee brought up the topic of non-members serving on certain sensitive committees. Among the opinions presented: that it has long been the policy of AFM as well as other Meetings within SAYMA, that certain positions and committee memberships be held by members of the Religious Society of Friends. The discussion included:

- If we change our policy now for certain well-qualified non-members, it may set a precedent and open the way to less qualified non-members in the future.
- We should trust our nominating committee to discern the best match between individual gifts and committee needs.
- Following the example of Peter in Acts, we should respond to the promptings of God to include an "outsider." We are people of the Light and can rely on our Inner Light to guide the work of the Meeting in choosing the right person.
- We have made exceptions in the past to allow a member of the Religious Society of Friends who was not a member of AFM to serve on Ministry and Counsel.
- We could make an exception to our policy without changing the general policy.

Meeting for Business asked M&C to season this matter further and report back. This is the report, of which we will seek your approval. With regards to Ministry and Counsel, we feel that membership in AFM should be adhered to as the general rule. However, there arise certain circumstances when a non-member is clearly the best choice and exceptions can be made if the candidate meets the following three requirements:

- (a) The candidate must be a well-seasoned person steeped in Quaker traditions and practices.
- (b) The Friend has the personal qualities which will best serve the needs of the committee.
- (c) The Friend has demonstrated a long-term commitment to AFM.

We note that these requirements are far more stringent than the requirements for becoming an actual member of the Meeting itself. We ask for your approval.

[*link to discussion of recommendations*](#)

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is pleased to put forward the names of Rylin Hansen and Tom Edelston to serve on

the Communications Committee. We ask that you approve Rylin Hansen's nomination. We ask that you approve of Tom Edelston's nomination.

[*link to discussion of nominations*](#)

SAYMA Faith and Practice

A group of about ten Friends met to consider the draft section on Community for the SAYMA Guide to Our Faith and Practice a week prior to our Eleventh Month business meeting. The following suggestions were made to be considered for approval and forwarded to the revision committee:

1. Although we are convinced that the monthly meeting is the best place to handle most community-building, and we understand why mention of SAYMA's Ministry and Nurture Committee may have been removed from paragraph four on conflict in the community, nevertheless, the role of Ministry and Nurture Committee in nurturing meeting community and the larger SAYMA community through visitation, facilitation, support and listening could perhaps be reinserted elsewhere in the section.
2. In the fourth sentence of paragraph five, we suggest that it may be valuable "to admit that we often fail to live up to our aspirations." We suggest that learning from facing our inadequacies could lead to solutions or steps toward them. Indeed, moving through this process provides an opportunity for growth.

A Friend pointed out a change in paragraph 4 that might be misinterpreted. Another clarified that it is Friends' practice to avoid all litigation. The first Friend asked that this question (of whether the sentence refers to all litigation, or just litigation among Friends) be taken to the Committee.

[*link to Minute approving recommended revisions*](#)

Communications Committee

Communications Committee met on 11/2/2009 at 6:30 p.m. Present were Rylin Hansen, Tom Edelson, and Steve Livingston (clerk).

We began with a discussion of how to use our Meeting weblog more fully. We want to encourage Friends to utilize the blog more as a substitute for a printed newsletter, but we find we are not united on the boundaries of what might be appropriate to post there. We will continue to seek clearness on this matter. We will continue to post items that are of interest and concern to the Meeting community as a whole.

We next addressed a concern for the manner in which the minutes of our meetings for business are published. Subsequent to the demise of our Meeting's printed newsletter, Meeting decided that the minutes as published on the website would be considered the official record of our business meetings. Friends have asked that the minutes be concise and readable, but occasionally reports are submitted that are so voluminous or are formatted so awkwardly as to render this impractical. We have addressed this problem in the past by posting such reports as separate documents, but that has occasionally resulted in the reports being too far separated from the rest of the minutes.

We felt that the best way to avoid such unintentional separation without unduly cluttering the recording clerk's account of the meeting, and without prejudice as to what constitutes a report that is too cumbersome, would be to include all committee reports as appendices to the minutes of the meeting, in the same manner as is practiced by our Yearly Meeting. Links can still be created to allow the reader to open the reports in a separate tab so they

can be viewed simultaneously with the recording clerk's account, if that is what the viewer wants to do. For those who wish to print a hard copy, this practice will eliminate the need to navigate to more than one location in order to print the reports along with the recording clerk's account.

Does Meeting approve this change in the manner in which the account of our Meeting for Business is published on the website?

[link to Minute approving posting of reports as appendices](#)

Finally, we have been developing a new Public Service Announcement, initially intended to invite listeners of public radio station WNCW-FM, but eventually to be used in other media. We would like Meeting to hear what we propose to offer, to be sure that everyone is comfortable with the wording, and to give us guidance as to whether, and how, to indicate our relationship to Christ-based denominations. Here is our proposed wording:

"Asheville Friends Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends invites you to learn about the Quaker Testimonies of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community and Equality. We are a welcoming congregation enjoying the diversity of all seekers.

You are invited to join us for unprogrammed silent worship of the Divine Sundays at 10am at 227 Edgewood Road, near the Univeristy of NC at Asheville."

Recognizing that this statement makes no reference at all to our roots in Christianity, we offer as a remedy the addition of the phrase "with roots in Christianity," after "welcoming congregation".

Can Meeting unite with one or the other of this proposed Public Service Announcements?

[link to discussion of recommended PSA's](#)

Finance

1. We mentioned in the last report an inability to access previous years' Meeting minutes. We have realized that we were mistaken, and that the minutes are in fact available on the website. Thanks to the Communications Committee for maintaining these.
2. The Committee has had a request from a member of Meeting to change the way we perform our financial activities. Currently we have online a computer belonging to David Clements, currently residing in David's home (previously at his place of business). This computer is intended to be, and usually is, accessible 24/7 by any of the three committee members who collectively work on the books (Adrienne Weir, Pat Johnson, and David). Adrienne and Pat are doing most of the basic work, and David is mostly doing review and troubleshooting. The file containing financial records is backup up daily to an internet-based storage utility (MozyHome). Backups are made to a portable drive, and transferred periodically to the Meeting Computer.

We have been asked by a member to have the members of the Finance Committee perform the work of meeting directly on the Meeting Computer. It was pointed out that with the data residing on a privately-owned computer,

access to this might not be guaranteed. The Finance Committee had previously perceived that it was not adequate to have only one person able to access the Quickbooks file.

There has been some uncertainty about whether Meeting had decided to have all of Meeting's computer work done on the Meeting House Computer. There had been a proposal to this effect made in 4/07 by the Communications Committee. There were concerns raised in the 4/07 Business meeting regarding the difficulties such a policy would present for the Finance Committee. We could not find record that the meeting had actually approved such a policy, and we feel such a policy should not be approved before considering the issue more.

We have discussed the issues raised. We feel it will be important to facilitate the ability of members of the committee to do the work in a way that is simplest for them. In general, most of us would prefer to be able to work from home. We also feel it important to have several people be easily able to be involved in and oversee the financial operations of Meeting, and easily able to access and work on the active data file. These two goals are most easily met by having a computer accessible over the Internet.

If meeting feels that it would like more security in the way these matters are handled, there are two ways we could accomplish this that would also keep our job simple. One would be to enable the Meeting house computer to be accessible online via an always-on internet connection such as DSL (which could cost as much as \$500 extra per year, plus the cost of upgrading Quickbooks in 2010, which will be about \$170). Another option would be to have the books done online through the on-line service, Quickbooks online, which would cost about \$500 per year.

A third option, which we are very comfortable with, would be to continue as we are doing. Adrienne has been having computer problems, and we might find it helpful to place the computer with the Quickbooks data at her house for her convenience, still able to be accessed by the others on the Committee. We would be happy to get assistance with making sure our backups are as secure as possible. For example, in the past the Quickbooks file were backup up to the MAIN server that hosts our website, and it might be arranged to back up the meeting data daily to this server. Note that we will need to purchase the Quickbooks upgrade for this option.

We would appreciate any feedback regarding these issues, to help the Committee determine whether to change our current practice.

[*link to discussion of Finance Committee report*](#)

Peace and Earth Committee

Peace and Earth is participating in feeding the homeless in Pritchard Park next First Day, November 15. Friends are invited to contribute juice or bread/protein items, such as sausage biscuits, bread and cheese, etc. Items need to be delivered to the Meeting House by Saturday night, November 14, at 9 PM. Please label your contribution and leave it in the kitchen.

Last month's contributions to MANNA Food Bank, coordinated by the Peace & Earth Committee, totaled 85 pounds.

Peace and Earth sponsored a presentation by Donna McDaniel, co-author (with Vanessa Julye) of "Fit for

Freedom, Not for Friendship" on Tuesday evening, October 27, preceded by a potluck. We had about 14 attenders, including two Friends from Swannanoa Meeting. On First Day, November 1, Peace and Earth sponsored a follow-up talk by Kitti Reynolds with information from this book about Friends' early involvement with enslavement

[link to discussion of report](#)