

**Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
Twelfth Month 19, 2010**

Clerk: Jennifer Rhode Ward

Recording Clerk: Steve Livingston

Present: Jim Barton, Bobby Carter, Jim Cavener, Gjeorge Gjelfriend, Kristi Gjelfriend, Joy Gossett, Rylin Hansen, Pat Johnson, Steve Livingston, Rusty Maynard, Edie Patrick, Alan Robinson, Adrienne Weir

Opening Worship

Reading:

We are warmed by fire, not by the smoke of the fire. We are carried over the sea by a ship, not by the wake of a ship. So too, what we are is to be sought in the invisible depths of our own being, not in our outward reflection in our own acts. We must find out real selves not in the froth stirred up by the impact of our being upon the beings around us, but in our own soul which is the principle of all our acts.

from Thomas Merton, "No Man is an Island"

Martin Luther King Prayer Breakfast Program Advertisement – Jim Cavener

The rate sheet for program advertising was passed around.

Jim informed us that our MLK Breakfast is the largest in the Southeast, and predominantly people of color. This year's program will be larger size, and glossy color. Ad prices have gone up a great deal. Many of the more progressive denominations take out ads each year. In all the years we've had an ad, Jim says, we've never had an inquiry as a result. Perhaps that is not the reason we run the ad, however. Jim expressed mixed feelings about recommending this expenditure.

A Friend rose in support of Jim's ambivalence, suggesting the money could be better spent in support of some kindred non-Quaker organization. The Friend suggested that Peace and Earth Committee be trusted to suggest an appropriate venue for this expenditure.

We were informed that the smaller size ads are \$60-\$75.

Other Friends felt that the program is a good outreach. It's valuable to put our name in front of people even if there is no direct, tangible result. We ought to consider the value of the ad as a statement in support of civil rights rather than a tool to advertise our existence.

A Friend indicated his discomfort with Meeting making donations of any kind to non-Quaker organizations.

A Friend offered that he and his partner would sponsor the Meeting's ad in the program. Friends agreed that this was a reasonable solution, and thanked these Friends for their generosity.

Nominating Committee - Gjeorge Gjelfriend

George indicated that he was stepping down as clerk of House and Grounds, and that John McCune was considering taking the position. His replacement (or co-clerking) will be brought to the next business meeting.

As clerk of House of Grounds, George felt overwhelmed by the volume of tasks needing attention, and asked that Friends who have suggestions for things needing to be done consider finding folks willing to do them. A Friend reminded us that some are not able to do, but often willing to suggest.

Spiritual Enrichment Committee – Steve Livingston

The committee has been pleased with the progress of SE programs, and the amount of enrichment that has resulted from each meeting. Though attendance is sometimes low, those present are always “present”. The committee thanks recent attenders and facilitators, and Steve distributed an outline of SE offerings for the coming year (January – April). Pat and Steve will lead a hike in April, and Dan Snyder will present his one-day retreat in the spring (probably a Saturday in May). The next session of Quakerism 101 will focus on contemporary Quakers/Quakerism. The committee will be more disciplined about arranging and announcing future Sandwich Sunday discussions.

Steve will send an electronic copy to the RE Committee so that they may coordinate committee activities.

Finance Committee – Pat Johnson

Pat reviewed the general budget, and indicated that we had had some “significant” contributions since the report was written. Nevertheless we have fallen far short of our budgeted income. Fortunately our expenditures have also been less than the budgeted amount. She explained that the utilities expenditure appeared much larger than in the previous report because previous expenditures that had been misallocated had been restored to their proper place.

The proposed 2011 budget recommends an income of about \$19,000, slightly less than was budgeted for 2010. Spending levels have remained close to the previous year, except \$200 was added for the Board of Directors. Finance Committee also recommends that the two lines for the RE Committee budget be consolidated into one line.

Finance Committee is also concerned that our Quickbooks software is aging and has needed replacement for quite some time. The newest version of the software we are using is not compatible with the computer equipment we are using, but the previous year’s version (2010) would be compatible and is only \$45.

A friend questioned why an upgrade is necessary in the first place. The Treasurer described new features that make her work and the work of the committee easier. A Friend pointed out that our

original acquisition of this particular software was done in error, and Meeting felt at the time imposed upon to accept it.

Pat queried Friends as to how to dispense with various line items in our Fund Balance sheet that had not seen any activity in a long time. Should some of these be combined, or perhaps returned to the General Fund, or left alone? Finance Committee asked that Friends consider this question for discussion at the next meeting for business.

A Friend pointed out that the computer in the office being dead, we might do well to buy a new one, using the peripherals from the office computer, and devote the new computer to the Finance Committee's needs. These suggestions were referred to Communications Committee.

A visitor brought up that an annual retreat is often helpful in devising a "mission statement" to guide budgeting decisions. The clerk responded that we do generally have an annual retreat, and we are unified in our over-arching goals, but our budgeting decisions do often require significant seasoning.

Clerk of House and Grounds reminded Friends that two years ago, unspent H&G moneys went to the emergency fund, but that practice was not followed last year. He recommended that due to the budget imbalance, the practice also not be followed next year. He also suggested that Meeting abandon its landline and acquire a cellphone. Friends offered some reasons why this would or would not be a good idea. Matter was referred to House and Grounds.

A Friend rose in objection to making donations to non-Quaker organizations, due to our declining income. Clerk reviewed the process by which our non-Quaker donations are decided upon by Peace and Earth, and the moneys come out of a fund agreed upon in the budgetary process. One criterion for such a donation is that at least one Asheville Friend is directly involved in the organization receiving funds. A Friend rose in support of Peace and Earth's discernment and in support of Meeting making contributions to non-Quaker organizations. A Friend reminded us that "when the meeting is over, the service begins." This Friend expressed that we as a Meeting have an obligation to maintain a presence in the world that goes beyond mere sustenance in the Religious Society of Friends.

A Friend suggested that we allow ourselves some time to resolve our budgetary uncertainties by stipulating that for the first couple of months of the new year, we hold our expenditures down to within the previous year's budget. It's counterproductive to try to discuss the budget before the year is actually over. The Treasurer reminded us that Finance Committee was not expecting a decision this month, but only wanted to open the discussion. The Friend reiterated that there is no need to begin the discussion in December, and asked that we not do so next year.

Clerk asked if Friends were comfortable with deferring discussion of general outreach until next business meeting or if we needed to have a called meeting for that purpose. She clarified the process for general outreach is that Meeting agrees to a dollar amount to be allocated as part of the budget process at the beginning of the year, and that Peace and Earth then allocates the money at the beginning of the following year. Thus moneys that were allocated in the 2010

budget have not in fact yet been spent. Friends were comfortable with having the discussion in next month's business meeting.

Announcements

- Rylin will facilitate next week's Sandwich Sunday discussion (focusing on traditions around changing of the seasons). You are encouraged to wear motley and/or straw in recognition of Rend Day (Wales/Ireland).
- Adrienne invited Friends to go Christmas Caroling with her.
- A Friend noted, with sadness, the lack of a Winter Solstice shared meal among the Meeting community.

Closing Worship