

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Asheville Friends Meeting

1st Month 12, 2014

Clerk: Laura Lane

Recording Clerk: Steve Livingston

Attendance: Leslee Johnson, Cormac Johnson Allen, Gail and Jim Hipkins, Katherine Kowal, Bobby Carter, Edie Patrick, Ruth Stewart, George Gjelfriend, Nancy Kuykendall, Sarah Jane Thomas, Kristi Gjelfriend, Pat Johnson, Adrienne Weir, Tom Edelson, Jim Cavener, Alan Robison, Chris and Bruce Howells, Jen Rhode Ward

Meeting began at with a moment of silence at 12 p.m.

The clerk shared two queries:

Are your meetings for business held in a spirit of worship? Are you considerate of differing views coming to a decision only when the meeting has found a sense of unity?  
(SAYMA)

How can we hold our meeting for business in the spirit of love, understanding, and unbity, without becoming frustrated by differences of opinion or the pressures of tiume?  
(Iowa YM)

The agenda was approved as posted.

**Minutes of 12<sup>th</sup> month meeting were approved as posted on the website.**

Note on Quaker Process

Clerk read a brief statement:

*Jen and I have gotten some feedback about the last business meeting. Some people felt that our decision to donate a large sum of money was rushed, and made without proper Quaker process. We understand that there were issues, and perhaps this gives us an opportunity to remind ourselves of Quaker process for business meeting.*

Clerk then read an excerpt from the SAYMA “Guide To Our Faith and Practice” on Meeting for Business:

*Monthly Meeting for Business is a Meeting for Worship with a concern for business. Our business procedure expresses our faith that the light, if heeded, draws all into agreement. Friends make decisions neither by vote nor by compromising a variety of*

*positions, but by full and prayerful consideration discerning a corporate “sense of the meeting”. Friends believe that decisions reached in this way carry with them an inward consent of the persons involved, rather than mere outward conformity. We seek the Truth that transcends individual differences. As we listen to and consider all views, we look for that place in our midst, beyond individual desires, where God's will is known.*

*Friends' Business Meetings begin in a period of worshipful silence out of which messages may come. Some meetings may find it helpful to open by reading a query. After the silence, the clerk of the meeting suggests an agenda for the session. If at all possible, the clerk should be informed of matters for the agenda beforehand, but the agenda may be modified by those present. Then the meeting proceeds to discuss each item. It is not necessary for everyone to speak on every issue; a worshipful atmosphere, free from trivial, unconsidered, or irrelevant comment will create a sense of the meeting. The clerk should create openings for all to speak. Intervals of silent attention between moments of speaking may lead to a deepening sense of unity.*

Clerk concluded with this observation:

*We as a community have a responsibility to ensure that Quaker process happens. Anyone is welcome and encouraged to speak up during meeting for business, if they feel Quaker process isn't happening.*

#### Treasurer's Report, 2014 Budget

Pat Johnson distributed a record of our past five years' budgets to facilitate the process of formulating our current budget.

Pat informed us that a great number of extra contributions came in at the end of the year, and thanked Friends for the generosity not only of their funds but of their time and efforts in support of the Meeting as well. She indicated that she had replenished the Ministry and Counsel Needs Fund and the Scholarship Fund.

Pat reviewed the income and expenditures. We ended up spending slightly under \$1400 more than we received for the year 2013. Pat assured Friends that there were still plenty of money in the general fund.

In response to a Friend's query, Pat indicated that there was no need to be dismayed about a small budget shortfall. Another Friend asked about the large disbursement approved last month, and Pat reminded Friends that we had agreed to draw that money from the Alice Brown Bequest rather than from the General Fund.

Pat reminded Friends that we are in the process of transferring our General Fund to the Self Help Credit Union.

A Friend expressed his feeling that Meeting had moved swiftly on last month's

disbursement because of our mutually held leading to use more of our funds for outreach, and suggested that we establish a contingency fund for this purpose. Pat reminded us that we had agreed to hold a threshing session on this concern.

A Friend suggested that we replenish the Alice Brown Fund in order to maintain her presence in our Meeting.

A Friend asked whether we are set about approving a budget today, and inquired if we could avoid this other concern in that process.

Clerk asked that we return to a consideration of the budget as proposed by Finance Committee, without further consideration of the proposed contingency fund.

In response to an inquiry, Pat described that this year's budget differs only slightly from last year's, except that Finance Committee needs some additional funding to purchase new version of Quickbooks.

**Friends approved the 2014 Budget as presented by Finance Committee.**

*Click this link to view budgets 2010-2014*

Pat reviewed the fund balances. Clerk suggested that Finance and Peace and Earth Committees both consider the proposals around greater outreach and bring a recommendation to the Meeting.

### House and Grounds

Adrienne Weir presented an annual report for 2013.

*click here to view House and Grounds Annual Report*

Adrienne noted that Doug Lane has been helping a lot but assiduously avoiding committee membership.

Adrienne indicated that longer range plans and larger projects will be funded from the various Meetinghouse funds rather than out of the general fund. She recounted significant cleanup that has taken place on the grounds.

Friends expressed gratitude for the annual report and for the work that has been accomplished.

### Peace and Earth

Katherine Kowal provided an annual summary and an action item.

*click here to view Peace and Earth Annual Report*

Mike Boehm of Madison (WI) Quakers – the folks we partnered with on the Vietnam well project – will be in the area 2/25 and 26, speaking at Swannanoa Valley Meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Would we like to have him speak here on the 25<sup>th</sup>? He will speak not only on the well project but other work his group is doing.

Friends united with the concern that only a few might come out on a weeknight in midwinter. Friends considered whether we should join with SVFM on the 26<sup>th</sup> rather than have an event of our own. A show of hands indicated a half dozen or so would be interested in attending an event here. Peace and Earth will consider this further at their meeting next week.

Katherine proceeded with the annual committee report. She offered that the committee had a very busy and productive year last year. She reported that the committee has lost two of its very active members and is seeking new members who are motivated to the work of the committee.

She reported that we donated \$50 to this year's Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast but we were not able to get an advertisement together in time for the printing of the program.

Pat Johnson spoke briefly about the two outdoor dramas we funded last year in Snow Camp, NC.

Friends accepted the report of the Peace and Earth Committee with thanks.

### Ministry and Counsel

Gjeorge read a report from the Committee

*Clerk read a brief report concerning Friend "F", whom we had requested to remove his personal belongings from the Meetinghouse property (see minutes of 11/13 meeting for business).*

*The week after our 11<sup>th</sup> month Meeting for Business, F finished clearing out his belongings on his own accord. He has found other places to store his belongings and left behind cleaned and orderly the places his belongings had occupied.*

*We wish to emphasize that he is still most welcome at Asheville Friends Meeting and we have made efforts to communicate this with him, though it has been difficult to make contact with him. We encourage all Friends to convey this message, too. We have offered F clearness and support committees should he so desire.*

Gjeorge brought two housekeeping items to Meeting. First, we do not have a policy about Friends staying overnight at the Meetinghouse when they are traveling to conduct Quaker business. He explained that the proposed policy being presented would be for those coming here for Quaker business, not for other purposes.

Ministry and Counsel offered the following proposed policy:

*Friends traveling on Quaker business may spend up to three nights in the Meeting House provided they meet the following qualifications.*

- (1) They provide AFM with a letter from the Clerk of at least one of the travelers' Meeting explaining their mission and asking us to accommodate them.*
- (2) They are exposed to the rental agreements and agree to abide by those parts that would apply to them.*
- (3) They have at least one member or regular attender of AFM who agrees to stay with them for the term of their stay.*
- (4) They agree to vacate the building during the day and also agree to not occupy the spaces being used by our regular renters.*

A Friend was troubled by the requirement that we have a Meeting member present. Gjeorge explained that it was not so much for the purpose of supervision as for providing the guest with a connection to the local community. Friends asked that we modify this rule to appoint a liaison rather than someone to stay overnight, and providing the visiting Friend with a telephone number of a nearby member to provide liaison. Friends also suggested that any such visitors could use the facility during the day as long as they are not interfering with other renters.

Adrienne recalled that this policy has come up in the past when a group of young adult Friends had come to stay here, and suggested that the presence of a local Friend could have provided guidance in the rules governing the Meetinghouse.

A Friend suggested that it might be difficult to decide which policy was germane in the case of traveling Friends: are they here on Quaker business or some other reason? In the latter case, a Meeting member would need to be present, but not the former. Who will decide? Adrienne explained that she would normally consult with others in Meeting if the visitors' purpose is ambiguous.

Ministry and Counsel will take these comments and concerns and continue to develop this policy.

Second, Gjeorge presented a proposal to deal with unauthorized vehicles in the parking lot:

*Vehicles may be parked in our parking lot during such times as their owners are attending worship, are renters or here on legitimate Quaker business. Otherwise, a notice will be placed on the windshield that drivers must have permission to park; and that the third time that vehicle is noted without our permission it will be towed away. Permission may be granted only by the clerk(s), the clerk of H&G, M&C or MFB. Ministry & Counsel, the clerk(s) and the clerk of H&G will maintain the list of permittees and will also be responsible for enforcement.*

**Friends approved the parking policy as presented.**

Mid Week Worship

Alan Robinson reminded Friends that a small group of us get together on Wednesday night for an hour of silent worship followed by a shared meal. We want to make this better known to Friends. He suggested that a brief comment regarding Midweek Meeting be added to the general announcements at rise of Meeting. He pointed out that the hosting of the meeting will be moving a little more often in the future, necessitating an announcement of the location and a contact telephone number.

**Friends approved adding these announcements at rise of Meeting.**

Other Business

Barbara Esther reminded Friends that Spiritual Enrichment Committee seeks to address any leadings and concerns that Friends wish to share with Meeting. Committee welcomes and actively seeks these for upcoming programs.

Closing worship

There being no further business, meeting adjourned with silence at 1 p.m.