

**Minutes**  
**Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business**  
**19th day, second month, 2006**

Steve Livingston—Clerk

Lynnora Bierce—Recording Clerk

Worship

Attendance:

Phil Neal, Kitti Reynolds, Alan Robinson, Rusty Maynard, Ellen Frerotte, Susan Mitchell, Sam Rizzo, Katherine Kowal, David Clements, George Gjelfriend, Kristi Gjelfriend, Satchel Loftis, Joy Gossett, Adrienne Weir, Ellen Oldham, and Rebecca Fitzgibbon (new).

Opening Reading:

Your clerk is not going to read a passage, a set of queries, or a famous quotation this month. I want to take this time instead to bring to the attention of Asheville Friends that our community is suffering from a weakness that has the potential of doing us harm.

We are all accustomed to sharing this community among ourselves, with our families, and our children, grateful to have a safe place for our worship and spiritual nurturing, and to be a part of the Religious Society of Friends. But we must recognize that a certain commitment of time, effort, wisdom, and toil is required to maintain our spiritual home.

With gratitude to the many Friends who have contributed to fulfilling these responsibilities, your clerk is concerned that some few Friends are feeling burdened with too large a share, while at the same time some vital elements of the community's sustenance are not being tended to in good Quaker order. If Way could open for a few Friends to offer a few hours of their time each month, we could proceed on our journey together in the new directions we have discerned.

At present, we are at risk of foundering.

Introductions

Rebecca Fitzgibbon was introduced, and welcomed as attending Business Meeting for the first time. We also welcomed back Susan Mitchell who has been away for an extended time. Also we celebrate the coming 5th birthday of member Lila Richardson.

**The agenda was approved as written.**

**The minutes of first month 2006 were approved as published**

QLSP Letter for Stephanie Gossett

**Meeting empowered the clerk to transmit the letter of recommendation written by Alice Brown as needed.**

Text of letter:

“Stephanie Gossett has been active in the meeting from the first time she attended First Day School. Since then she has become an essential part of the First Day School Junior Meeting for Business and with the teenage discussion group. She has been an active member of SAYF and served as co-clerk. In addition she took advantage of the opportunity to attend a summer workcamp for high school students at Pendle Hill in '03. With her experience within the meeting, SAYF, Pendle Hill and her school

activities, her ability to lead, to share responsibility and to contribute to the meeting merit your consideration for participation in the Quaker Leadership Scholars Program and scholarship assistance.”

### Ministry and Counsel report

Report was given by George Gjelfriend.

“Ministry and Counsel Committee Meeting January 10, 2006

“Present: Alice Brown, George Gjelfriend, Kristi Gjelfriend, Martha Huggins, Katherine Kowal, Steve Livingston

“We revisited the AFM alcohol policy. We recognize that we do not have a problem with alcohol consumption but rather a difference of opinion about when it is appropriate to use alcohol in relation to the meeting. After due consideration, Ministry and Counsel asserts that we do have a policy on alcohol consumption and we have no further recommendations regarding alcohol use at this time.

“We addressed the issue of associate membership in AFM. Many Friends Meetings have abandoned this practice as being outmoded. We talked about setting an age limit for associate memberships but realized that the actual end of such a relationship comes when the person no longer has that association with the meeting. Any policy we create would need to describe how we can discern when that happens. Some teens are associate members but aren't aware of the fact. We agreed to hold this issue over to our February meeting when seasoning may lead to clarity.

“We held the meeting in the Light and Steve shared a special concern for the Christian Peacemakers Teams in Iraq and Lebanon.”

A Friend spoke to the idea of associate membership *vis a vis* teens, but feels that associate membership is really officially reserved for children of registered members.

George clarified that the teens do not know what associate membership is, but feel that they have a sense of belonging nonetheless.

Susan Mitchell offered to give her time to labor over this concern with others who feel led to work on this concern. Friends David Clements and Phil Neal offered to join in this.

David offered that Meeting needs to have a procedure officially adopted regarding membership as one is currently being put into place regarding marriage.

Although Meeting was united around these Friends reviewing the matter of Associate Membership in our Meeting, one Friend reiterated the need for membership procedure aside from associate membership.

A Friend expressed dissatisfaction with Ministry and Counsel’s recommendation that the Meeting’s alcohol policy not be amended at this time, but agreed with setting the matter aside. Clerk pointed out that Meeting is not united on where our boundaries ought to be with regard to alcohol consumption. He reminded us that the incident during the retreat happened contrary to the rules of our hosts.

A Friend pointed out that direct communication could be in place which would make an official policy unnecessary. Another Friend offered that a sign could be placed in the manner of the peanut sign.

**Friends accepted the report of Ministry and Counsel.**

## Long Range Planning

Long Range Planning and Visioning Report was given by George Gjelfriend.

“The Long Range Planning and Visioning Committee met on the 20th of January at the meetinghouse. We welcomed Ellen Frerotte to our committee as a representative of the Spiritual Enrichment Committee.

“We agreed to remain clerkless, with Lynnora convening the meetings and taking notes.

“We identified 2 major issues within the meeting that seem to be hindering our community’s long-term health.

- 1 There is a growing concern that many individuals in the community who have been instrumental in the health of the meeting are getting burned out. Due to this overall diminished energy, some important work is not being accomplished.
- 2 We came up with queries and tasks to help us see more clearly our current issues with the state and future of the Meetinghouse.
  - a) Poll standing committees about their particular issues, challenges and suggestions regarding the Meetinghouse.
  - b) Explore the options House and Grounds have already researched.
  - c) Find out how the usage of the Meetinghouse has changed over the last 10 years, and/or last 5 years.
  - d) Communicate these Meetinghouse issues with the entire community.
  - e) Compare Ownership versus Rental of our Worship space.
    - i. Ask why do we own property?
    - ii. Why did the meeting decide to have a Meetinghouse?
    - iii. How are these reasons still valid, or no longer valid?”

## **Friends accepted the report.**

## Transfers of Membership

**Friends approved the transfer of Dan Snyder to Swannanoa Valley Meeting.**

**Friends approved the transfer of Susan Schmidt to Celo Meeting.**

**Friends approved the transfer of Katherine Kowal from Community Friends Meeting (Cincinnati OH) to Asheville Meeting.**

Text of the letters of transfer may be found at:

[Dan Snyder](#)

[Susan Schmidt](#)

[Katherine Kowal](#)

## **Peace and Earth Report**

Kitti Reynolds gave the Peace and Earth report.

“Peace and Earth budget for 2005: we decided to spend 25% on the Western North Carolina Alliance, 10% to Asheville-Buncombe Community Relations, 25% to MANNA Foodbank, 10% to Helpmate, 30% to Oxfam America for earthquake relief. These percentages are to be used on whatever money we have left after the two expenditures already made, \$40 to Sarah Jane Thomas for meals for Women's Center and \$75 for the MLK Jr. breakfast brochure.

“Kitti will send announcements about the Meeting approval of the STEP resolution from FCNL to local

papers (this was done over Christmas break).

“Susan Oehler reported that there may be a North Carolina version of the Eyes Wide Open exhibit from AFSC coming to Asheville in April. We also discussed sending a representative to the Long Range Planning Committee. None of those present felt they had any extra time to commit to this work.”

Regarding FCNL Priorities, a Friend suggested a list on the announcement board that could be ranked re FCNL request. (name, each area of interest). Another Friend asked that it also be made available electronically.”

**Peace and Earth recommends and Friends approved that Asheville Friends Meeting become a member of Western North Carolina Peace Coalition.**

Clerk suggested to Friends that we put our money where our mouths are. There seems to be support for this from the meeting, as well and support in the Peace and Earth budget. Friends recommended to Peace and Earth that a donation be made to the WNC Peace Coalition from Peace and Earth’s discretionary funds.

A Friend asked if membership in the Peace Coalition would help ensure that our phones were tapped.

**Friends accepted the report.**

#### Nominating Committee

The committee did not offer a report; however, the clerk reported that the two Friends who have served longest on the Committee, including the clerk of the committee, will soon be asking for release from this service. Our Meeting has maintained a policy of assigning an ad hoc “naming” committee to the task of discerning who will serve on Nominating Committee so that the committee does not have to nominate its own members. Three Friends had been serving on Naming but one was released some months ago. Another Friend has been added to the committee but this Friend has not been available for meeting. The clerk felt that the work of discernment requires at least three Friends to accomplish in a Quakerly fashion, and sought advice from the Meeting: should we seek another Friend to serve with the naming committee? Should we be content with the work of the committee being done by only two people? What if the two people are the clerk and recording clerk of the meeting? Should we simply wait until the third Friend is available to proceed with the work of the committee? Should we abandon the idea of having a naming committee, and empower the nominating committee to name its own members?

Friends recognized that the naming committee relieved the burden of Nominating Committee members naming their own replacements. Others felt that the committee was not necessary, especially with the burden of work on the current membership. Friends asked that clerk consult with Nominating Committee and bring the matter back to meeting next month.

BREAK 1:20 to 1:35

#### Communications Committee

Lynnora Bierce read the report.

“Communications Committee met on January 21, 2006 at Greenberry’s coffee house. In attendance: Gary Briggs, Kieron Mann, Steve Livingston, Linda Alfredson, Lynnora Bierce.

“Absent: Satchel Loftis and Stephen Houseworth

“Directory Update: Linda showed us the vast materials that she had gathered for the formation of an updated directory, as well as an aid to determine our population and assessment to SAYMA. The committee helped sift through our old lists to discern who was still attending, who had moved, and who still needed to give permission to be on our contact information directory. Each in attendance was given a short list people to contact.

“State of Computers in AFM: We discussed the donation of a computer to the meeting from Agnita Dupree. She originally had wanted the computer to go to an individual. The computer had taken up space in the Meetinghouse, with no practical application. A member of the meeting had expressed a need for a computer, and as 1) it was not being used by the meetinghouse, 2) it was not necessarily the best computer for the meeting’s needs as discerned by the communications committee, 3) and the donor’s wishes were for the computer to be useful to an individual; the communications committee recommends to the meeting for this computer to be donated to the individual (Ellen Oldham.)

“We also discussed that if the meeting requires a computer in the future we will research the communication needs of the meeting, and make a suggestion of a system for the meeting to acquire.”

A Friend noted that Ellen Oldham’s receiving of the computer would be of enormous benefit for her being able to communicate for the purposes of the meeting and enable her to participate more fully in the work of the meeting.

**Friends approved the recommendation to give Ellen Oldham the computer donated to the Meeting by Agnita Dupree.**

**Friends accepted the report of the Communications Committee.**

#### Finance Committee

David Clements read the report.

“1. Meeting currently lacks both a Treasure and a permanent Clerk of the Finance Committee. David Clements will be functioning for the time being as Clerk of the Committee. We have asked the Nominating Committee to bring forth names of Friends willing to serve on the Finance Committee in any capacity, but especially those who might be able to take on one of the two leadership positions. We ask any interested friends to speak to the Nominating Committee. Friends are welcome to attend Finance Committee Meetings. The next meeting will be next First Day, February 19, 8:30 am at the Meeting House.

“2. We will present a first draft budget for 2006. In 2005 both income and expenses were overestimated by more than 20%. We strongly recommend that Meeting limit the budget to the amount of income received in 2005, \$28,000. The budget presented today derives from requests of some committees and continuation of certain other budget items. We have eliminated the lines for childcare and for “Committees,” neither of which were used in 2005. The QLSP Scholarship line will not be needed in 2006, as there are currently no enrollees in the program. We received no requests from, and did not budget for, the Long-Range Planning, Fundraising, and prospective 2007 Retreat Committees. Please let the Finance Committee know if these Committees will have financial needs. We have included a contingency line which is intended to pay for cost overruns for other lines as well as for other unexpected needs that appear during the year. We are attempting to make sure that each budget line has supervision by a committee. For the moment, we have kept the budget within the proposed limit of \$28,000 by equally limiting General Outreach and Quaker Outreach. In recent years each of these lines has been \$3,000. In this first draft of the budget, both lines are reduced to \$1,600. We encourage Meeting to consider carefully whether to accept these cuts in the Outreach budget or to make cuts in

other areas. Alternatively, Meeting could choose not to follow the Finance Committee's recommendation to limit spending. We remind Friends that if our income increases in 2006 we might increase expenses, including Outreach, in 2007. We would like to hear from friends, both in the Business Meeting today and in other communications to the committee. We hope that we might present a final budget for approval by the March Meeting for Business.

“3. We recommend supervision of various budget lines as follows. Supervision means that the Committee would determine how the money is spent, and that the clerk of the committee would approve requests for expenditures or reimbursements. These assignments are preliminary, subject to feedback from Meeting and from the Committees.

- a. Finance Committee
  - i. Bookkeeper wages
  - ii. Bank Charges
  - iii. Property and Liability Insurance
  - iv. Workers Compensation Insurance
  - v. Supplies for mailings of appeal letters, etc.
- b. Administrative Committee
  - i. Office expenses (general, not committee expenses)
- c. House and Grounds
  - i. Utilities
- d. Religious Education Committee
  - i. Childcare
  - ii. First Day School
  - iii. SAYF
- e. Ministry and Counsel
  - i. Celebrations and Refreshments (includes reimbursement for food items bought for Meeting; Christmas party; other meeting celebrations or functions)
  - ii. Advertising
- f. Spiritual Enrichment Committee
  - i. Literature for visitors
- g. Communications Committee
  - i. Website
  - ii. Newsletter (no request for funding received, and not funded in the draft budget)
- h. Peace and Earth
  - i. General Outreach (with input from the community, but approval of meeting not required)
  - ii. Quaker Outreach (tentatively—with input from the community, but approval of meeting not required)
  - iii. Peace and Earth expenses
- i. Meeting would approve any expense from the contingency line

“Respectfully Submitted, David Clements”

Satchel Loftis presented the Finance Committee's Budget Plan for 2006, with each line item in the budget assigned to a particular committee. The Plan may be found at:

[2006 Budget Plan](#)

## **Friends accepted the report of the Finance Committee and the Budget Plan as presented.**

### Spiritual Enrichment Committee

Ellen Frerotte read the report.

“The Spiritual Enrichment Committee recently met to consider two particular concerns on behalf of the AFM community – how do our current practices around break of meeting serve our community and what is the best format in which to offer Quakerism 101 to our community? In our discernment process for each concern we listened deeply to input from the community as well as to the work of the spirit among us as we gathered.

“In our discernment around the first concern we were called to look at two very salient needs of our community in regards to how we break meeting. The first is based on the understanding that part of our work as a community is to offer ongoing welcoming to newcomers and visitors. This work is there for us whether we choose to recognize it or not. We have the choice to experience this work as a heavy or light yoke to bear. As we sat with this recognition as a committee we were clear that this work is an opportunity that we want very much to nurture. In this vein, we reflected on how our current practices around the break of meeting work to welcome newcomers and visitors. We were clear that there have been a number of First Days on which our practices have seemed to overwhelm some visitors who appeared to glaze over and even leave before the break of meeting was complete.

“The second salient need we considered is a consistent message from Friends that we honor this time of transition in a way that leaves Friends with the experience of inner peace that worship offers. This seems like an important aspect of how we nurture each other as Friends. What we realized as we reviewed recent experiences at break of meeting is that we need to be mindful of the total amount of time we take together, to understand that long, drawn out announcements as well as sharings of “afterwords” or “joys and concerns” often drain the gathered energy of our community. So too does a constant repetition of the same announcements week after week or a “rote” script. What seems to energize the community most is being led out of meeting for worship in a way that keeps us connected as a community and to the spirit among us.

“We have decided to offer the following to the community. Spiritual Enrichment would like to take more responsibility for the break of meeting. We will divide up the calendar of First Days among those individuals on our committee who are led to the serve the meeting in this way. We will also request that other individuals in the community that feel led to serve in this way contact our committee in order to sign up for this service, rather than just filling a void. This means that our committee will take responsibility for avoiding any voids. We also offer the following guidelines for the break of meeting:

- Individuals breaking meeting are asked to plan to make themselves available for at least 15 minutes following meeting for worship to answer questions and serve as a point person for visitors and newcomers. This would include announcing this to the community as part of breaking meeting. Of course, part of this work may be directing a newcomer or visitor to someone else present at meeting who may be better suited for meeting the visitors needs.
- Individuals are asked to refrain from offering a time for sharing messages that did not rise to the level of vocal ministry. We can trust that these messages will come to our community as spirit allows.
- Individuals are asked to experiment with allowing the spirit to lead them in many other aspects of our break of meeting process.
- “Joys and Sorrows” can be offered at any point in the process that seems right on that day. Experimenting with the format for how we hold each other and our own “Joys and Sorrows” is

also welcome.

- Welcoming of newcomers and visitors can be offered at any point in the process and can be done in a variety of ways.
- Certain announcements may need to be offered at least monthly, such as mid-week meeting, how to make a financial contribution. Individuals breaking meeting can discern whether these announcements fit into a particular First Day's break of meeting process based on what else is going on.
- Quaker readings on any First Day and/or community building exercises on Fourth First days can be part of the discernment of the individual breaking meeting. Community building exercises are encouraged to be offered as an additional event that Friends can choose to stay for or not.
- We ask that the individuals breaking meeting hold a gentle, loving boundary for our community around announcements. We will focus our announcements on AFM activities, with a particular emphasis on those that are most timely. Friends can offer their announcements in written form to the person breaking meeting. It may be necessary for the person breaking meeting to hold a particular announcement and make it explicitly available to Friends on the white board in the foyer, in our weekly e-calendar and/or by identifying a particular person who can tell Friends more about a certain event after break of meeting. We discourage individuals breaking meeting from asking openly for announcements and encourage trust in knowing that spirit will guide them when flexibility may be called for.
- This brings us to a final issue that impacts how we both welcome newcomers and help maintain our sense of gathering as a community. We have noticed that when the break of meeting process takes more than 15 minutes, our community seems to lose its energy. We ask that individuals breaking meeting and our entire community be mindful of this.

“We welcome feedback from the meeting regarding our discernment. We will continue to revisit the questions of how our practices at break of meeting are serving our community. We see our job as doing our best to meet the needs of individuals in our community, but ultimately to make sure that our work is actively nurturing and speaking the needs of our community as a whole. This means individuals may need to let go of having things done in a certain way in order for the community to be best served. This dance of balancing our own individual needs with the needs of our community is part of the spiritual work we all have to do together.

“The second concern we considered as a community was how to offer Quakerism 101 in a way that would best serve our community. After reflecting on input that we received from friends interested in Quakerism 101, we have decided to organize a Saturday gathering on April 1 that will focus on Quakerism 101 from 1 pm – 5 pm, following up with a community wide potluck and gathering for shared music, games and other activities as we are led. We will also consider offering periodic forum times for exploring Quakerism throughout the coming year. Friends who are inspired to delve more deeply into Quakerism following April 1 may call for the organization of a more structured format based on one of the curricula available, which generally focus on a series of meetings over time. Again, we will continue to discern how our community will best be served on this subject following April 1.

Submitted by Evan Richardson on behalf of the Spiritual Enrichment Committee.

### **Friends accepted the report.**

#### Personal Concerns

Phil N asked whether the need for more Friends to service to the health of the community might be brought to attenders' attention at rise of meeting. Referred to Spiritual Enrichment Committee.

Recording Clerk again encouraged Friends to use simple speech as much as possible.

Joy G reminded meeting of the need for adult support for SAYF, as she is rotating off of the SAYF Steering Committee in June.

**Meeting ended at 2:40 p.m. after a few moments of silence.**