

March 2006
Meeting for Business Minutes

Worship

Attendance:

Alice Brown, Ellen Frerotte, Eda Smith, Gerry Smith, Palin Spruance, Margaret Normile, Katherine Kowal, Sam Rizzo, George Gjelfriend, Kristi Gjelfriend, David Clements, Steve Houseworth, Martha Huggins, Will Kaylor, Barbara Esther, Robin Wells

Steve Livingston—Clerk
Lynnora Bierce—Recording Clerk

Opening Reading:

Usually when we face problems, we look at them from our own point of view. We even sometimes deliberately ignore other aspects of a situation. This often leads to negative consequences. However, it is very important for us to have a broader perspective. We must come to realize that others are also part of our community. We can think of our community as a body, with arms and legs as parts of it. Of course the arm is different from the leg; however, if something happens to the foot, the hand should reach down to help. Similarly, when something is wrong within our community, we must help.

—from An Open Heart: Practicing Compassion in Everyday Life by the Dalai Lama

Introductions

Welcome Steve Houseworth back among us. Clerk introduced Palin Spruance and we welcomed him to his first meeting for business with Asheville Friends Meeting.

Review of Agenda—Approved as written

News of Ourselves—Martha Huggins noted that March 10th is the anniversary of the death of her mother, Teeny Oldham.

David Clements brought up the idea or opportunity of co-housing relative to meeting.

Review of Minutes

The clerk expressed apology for not assuring that the requested update to Finance Committee's report had been made, and that some members of our community had not received a copy of the minutes in a timely fashion.

Review of Second Month Minutes was held over until next month.

Ministry and Counsel

Report was given by Martha Huggins.

“Ministry and Counsel Committee met Feb 14, 2006.

“A request to use the meetinghouse was received. The request is from a group of students from Eckerd College who will be working on a Habitat for Humanity project in Asheville during their spring break. We were uncomfortable with this request based on the lack of a person in the meeting to supervise the use of the meetinghouse and decided to turn down the request.

“Ministry and Counsel will not take on the responsibility for the budget item refreshments/celebrations. We recognize that our meeting suffers from the lack of a Hospitality Committee. We do have a policy that states that all foods brought to meeting sponsored events not contain peanuts or peanut oil or be processed foods that may contain allergens. Friends are reminded to bring a list of ingredients for the dishes they prepare so that allergic individuals can know whether the dish is something they can safely eat.”

Respectfully Submitted,
Martha O. Huggins

Friends accepted the report of Ministry and Counsel.

Nominating Committee

The Recording Clerk read the report.

“In an effort to energize our meeting the Nominating Committee has come up with the following proposal: We will be scheduling post meeting work/sharing days during open forum times. Our hope is to have various committees which need help with their work utilize these days to get the meeting community involved.

“Nominating Committee is still trying to fill openings in the community. We would like all committee clerks who have Friends attending their meetings, who are not officially members, to contact Nominating Committee if you would like to suggest their nomination.

“We have a brief minute regarding nominating process in filling openings on committees:

“1) When Friends feel led to serve on a particular committee, we ask that you speak with the clerk of that committee, who in turn is asked to contact the Nominating Committee.

“2) Any Friend who has gifts or leadings that could serve the community is asked to contact the appropriate committee clerk and arrange to attend a committee meeting. (Number 1 would then follow.)”

Meeting approved the guidelines for bringing potential committee members to the attention of the Nominating Committee.

Friends accepted the report of Nominating Committee.

Clerk asked Meeting to approve Friends to serve on Naming Committee so that we may move forward with the process of naming Friends to serve on Nominating Committee.

Friends approved Alan Robinson, Ellen Oldham, and Evan Richardson to serve on Naming Committee, with thanks.

Friends approved Lynnora Bierce’s release from Naming Committee.

Clerk notes that there are two committees that are not yet functional due to lack of personnel: the Administrative Committee and the First Day Structure Change Committee.

In response to a Friend’s request to have communication about the committees that exist along with the convener/clerk of each committee, Friends were informed that such a document already exists on line that lists all committees along with their makeup, however it requires updating.

A Friend suggested that in addition to the info shared at the break of meeting for worship, add the needs for specific committees to be filled (along with our financial need *vis a vis* the donations box).

David C. said that the inception of the Administrative Committee may be deferred without causing harm, and that the work of this committee could be undertaken at a future date when more members and a clerk for the committee can be found. Clerk asked if David could continue to do this work without the aid of a committee. David answered that this work would be better accomplished if under the discernment of a committee.

A Friend expressed concern about the thread-bareness of certain committees.

Nominating needs specific information from the clerk of each committee: which committee members attend; which members need release; which committees particularly have few members; etc. Communication in the matter needs to be addressed and sent to Nominating especially during this time of year.

Further concerns were addressed to Nominating clerk Barbara E. as she had just arrived.

A Friend noted that it seems that the procedure is different than in the past. Barbara noted that this new way gives the Friend who feels led to serve a chance to try the committee first, and allow the clerk of the committee to confer with Nominating. Friends who visit any (except M&C) committee have the way opened to officially serve on the committee by having the clerk of that committee clear it with Nominating. We are all encouraged to recruit each other for Committee work, as the beginning of the process not the end. The end of the process is always with Nominating Committee's discernment. Barbara pointed out that these guidelines did not apply to positions of responsibility, but only to service on Committees other than Ministry and Counsel.

Spiritual Enrichment

Ellen F reported that plans were in place for a Quakerism 101 "mini-retreat" from 1 pm to 5 pm April 1, 2006. Childcare will be provided. SE Committee encourages seasoned Quakers to attend to add to the conversational quality of the gathering. Included in the retreat: Quaker history and testimonies, branches of Quakerism, meeting for worship, meeting for business, vocal ministry, and a thirty-minute video exploring values and concerns among the different branches of Quakerism. There is a need for some childcare providers. The committee hopes it will be possible to taking the older children off site for bowling, a movie or other activities to break up the 4 hours of the mini-retreat.

Peace and Earth

Friends were reminded to consider recommendations for legislative priorities to give to Friends Committee on National Legislation to hold in the coming legislative session.

Friends were informed that the upcoming Friends General Conference gathering in Washington State is already full and has a growing waiting list.

Finance Committee

Report of AFM Finance Committee, 3/12/06

"1. We continue to function without a Treasurer or permanent Clerk of the Finance Committee. We invite friends interested in working with the Finance Committee to speak to the Nominating Committee (nominating@ashevillefriends.org). Friends are welcome to attend Finance Committee Meetings. The next meeting will be on Sunday March 26, 8:30 am at the Meeting House.

"2. We present the 2006 budget for approval. We note one major change, which was made at the last business meeting but not reflected in the minutes: an increase in the requested SAYF budget from \$650 to \$2,000. After extended consideration, the Finance Committee continues to recommend that the 2006 budget be limited to \$28,000, and that for the moment the Outreach budget be limited to the amount available once other needs are met (the amount is currently \$1100, but might be increased if other committees agree to reduce their needs). In the event that we raise more than \$28,000 or finish the year with a surplus, we will make Meeting aware of this, with the hope that we might restore last year's Outreach amounts of \$3,000 for each of Quaker Outreach and General Outreach. Last month Meeting asked the Fundraising Committee to consider whether they might be willing to increase our goal for contributions beyond the \$28,000."

Friends were not comfortable with limiting the budget in a way that allocates sufficient funds to the needs of the Meeting at the expense of leaving our Outreach underfunded. Friends noted that "Outreach" includes donations that we make to wider Quaker organizations as well as non-Quaker organizations whose work reflects Quaker values. Friends were informed that the ad hoc Fundraising Committee is looking more to a long-term rather than immediate approach to fundraising. While the Finance Committee's approach of budgeting only the amount we might fairly expect to raise based on our previous year's experience seemed prudent to some Friends, other Friends felt that a first step in generating greater income is to set a higher goal. Friends expressed dismay at the potential loss of connection to the wider communities to whom we contribute, and the value we derive from our contributions to their work.

The clerk identified the imbalance between our good intentions and the reality of our obligation to meet the needs of our own community with the funds we expect to receive. Clerk asked that we consider whether Finance Committee had fulfilled their charge of presenting a budget that reflects our reality as well as our intentions. Clerk acknowledged the

weight of our concerns about curtailing the Outreach budget, and asked if Friends could speak to that concern without laying the burden on the Finance Committee.

A Friend suggested making space to set the goal higher with a parenthetical clause at the end of each budget statement. A Friend said that as a Quaker he often finds himself uniting with things that do not necessarily agree with the self. Although he agreed with the budget, but in his heart he wanted to allocate the full amount to outreach and work it out at the end of the year, as always seems to happen. A Friend agreed about raising the bar somewhat, which may be helpful for Fundraising Committee by giving them a clear goal for the amount needed to be raised. A Friend said she heard less agreement about what we plan to do and more about what we actually do, and in the end what we do is more important than what we planned.

Clerk asked that we name our intention to raise more money than we did during the previous year in order to fund our Outreach at the same level as last year.

Friends minuted our intention to expend all due effort to raise more funds/money than we did during 2005, so that we will be able to contribute to Outreach as in previous years' levels or beyond.

Friends approved the Budget as offered by the Finance Committee.

"3. In the February Business Meeting we presented recommendations for supervision of various budget lines. The minutes as recorded represented an earlier version of these assignments rather than what was actually presented. The following are our proposed assignments, which we would like Meeting to approve. "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. We use the word "Supervision" rather than the traditional Quaker term "Oversight" because of the historical association of the term "Oversight" with United States slavemasters.

"The Finance Committee has asked the Board of Directors of the Asheville Friends Meeting Corporation, which legally owns and is responsible for our bank and investment accounts, to approve corporate resolutions designating George Gjelfriend, Valerie Collins, and David Clements as signatories for all our accounts. There is an assumption by one bank that the signers will all be directors or officers. For this reason we have asked the Board of Directors to consider appointing (elect) George Gjelfriend to the Board. We have also realized that having three members of the Board of Directors on the Finance Committee would facilitate accomplishing perfunctory and routine Board matters during Finance Committee meetings. We remind Friends that according to the bylaws of our corporation all of these decisions will need to come before the Monthly Meeting for ratification before they are effective. Any Friend who has concerns about the actions we have asked the Board to take will please speak to a member of the Finance Committee."

Friends accepted the report of Finance Committee.

Personal Concerns

Barbara E raised a concern about Meeting's small amount of input to SAYMA's Faith and Practice Revision Committee. She reported that there is an additional opportunity for input. She suggested that we use some time to visit Faith and Practices through the meeting (which she will supervise) and offered that the various committees could piece out sections of the Faith and Practice Revisions during their meetings. We have a chance to be more responsible and responsive. Especially "sexuality" has not been visited by our meeting. There was a sense that Friends approved of the system that Barbara promised to coordinate. This would happen some time between now and the July meeting of the Faith and Practice Revision Committee.

Kristi Gj asked if we could conduct a survey of our community to learn how much time and energy each of us spends on "outreach" to other organizations with Quaker values. She suggested a possible survey, or encouraging each member of the community to write a report.

Close of Meeting

Meeting ended with silent worship at 2:05 p.m