

Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business Second Month 13, 2011

Clerk: Katherine Kowal

Recording Clerk: Jennifer Rhode Ward

Present: Bobby Carter, David Clements, Barbara Esther, Gjeorge Gjelfriend, Kristi Gjelfriend, Joy Gossett, Deanna Hatch, Rylin Hansen, Pat Johnson, Steve Livingston, Rusty Maynard, Edie Patrick, Kitti Reynolds, Sarah Jane Thomas, Paola Villatoro-Weir, Adrienne Weir, Robin Wells

Opening Worship

Reading

“My working definition of truth is simple, though practicing it is anything but: ‘Truth is an eternal conversation about things that matter, conducted with passion and discipline.’ Truth cannot possibly be found in the conclusions of that conversation, because the conclusions keep changing. So if we want to live ‘in the truth’ it is not enough to live in the conclusions of the moment. We must find a way to live in the continuing conversation with all its conflicts and complexities, while staying in close touch with our own inner teacher.”

- Parker Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness*, p. 127

Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

Review of Minutes

- 10th Month 2010 minutes were approved as written and posted.
- 12th Month 2010 minutes were approved as written and posted, after striking Gjeorge Gjelfriend’s resignation from the House & Grounds Committee.
- 1st Month 2011 minutes were approved as written and posted. The proposed budget from last month will be linked to the minutes from last month. Friends asked that a copy of the budget be linked within, and attached to, end of the current month’s minutes.
- Called Meeting for Business, 23rd Day 1st Month 2011 minutes, and notes about the results of the People of Faith for Just Relationships meeting, were approved as written and posted. Note that anyone can now sign the *People of Faith for Just Relationships* petition, found on their website, or you can send your name to Alan Robinson to be added to the petition.

Called Meeting Follow-Up

Following the MFB held 3 weeks ago, wherein the Meeting approved its involvement with the People of Faith for Just Relationships resolution to be presented to the Asheville City Council, PFJR held a press conference at First Congregational UCC on Oak Street. Our Meeting was represented by Katherine Kowal (Clerk) and Alan Robinson (Ministry and Counsel). There were approximately 45 clergy and faith community persons, representing a wide variety of religious traditions. Approximately seven people spoke in advocacy of the resolution that would, 1) add language to the city’s employment discrimination clause to include sexual orientation, gender, and gender-identity or expression, 2) enact an anti-bullying ordinance for all city institutions and grounds, 3) create a Domestic partner Registry

to recognize same-sex relationships, and 4) endorse and support the right of same-sex couples to share in the rights and responsibilities of civil marriage.

There were also approximately 75 members of the press and public at the press conference, and many press obtained video, audio, and still images and interview material that later appeared in many local media outlets.

Now, PFJR is asking for help from all faith communities and individuals who live, work, or attend a faith community in the City of Asheville to add their names in support of the resolution to be presented to the Asheville City Council. Please collect names for this purpose from those who are willing to be listed as supporters and return them to Alan Robinson who will make sure they are entered into the petition's list of supporters. You can also go to the PFJR website to enter your own name if you wish to do so, and to read the full text of the resolution.

Finance Committee – Pat Johnson

***Budget**

The Clerk asked that all committees get their requests, in writing, to the finance committee in November of each year.

Religious Education agreed to keep 3 separate lines within their budget, and to consult Meeting for Business if any item went more than 10% above the planned expenditure. The Religious Education Committee asked the Finance Committee to increase their budgeted childcare line from \$800 to \$1350, a more realistic figure. The First Day School amount can be adjusted up (from \$300) midyear if more children attend Meeting. RE noted that SAYF might save money by avoiding van rentals.

Pat noted that there is a new line for insurance for the Board of Directors, which we have never had before. David Clements reported that our liability insurance covers injuries or damage that occurs on the property (including sexual misconduct), and we have workman's compensation insurance, but neither of these policies covers lawsuit actions (which are typically suites against the Board of Directors or its members; like many organizations, our Meeting indemnifies its directors, so will cover the cost of legal defense expenses and judgments against the BOD). This insurance would pay for costs of these defenses and judgments. David noted that the cost of this insurance might have risen since he last got a quote for it. One Friend was uneasy about getting this insurance and she did not see a need for this insurance; another responded that it was industry practice to carry this insurance, and that we were about to embark upon Meetinghouse renovations which might make this insurance more necessary. A Friend seconded the concern of the first Friend. Adrienne said that, as project manager for upcoming Meetinghouse renovations, she would feel more at ease if we had this insurance.

A Friend asked about the SAYMA dues, and expressed concern about the rate of SAYMA expenditures (including supporting non-profits). A Friend noted that M&C has discussed both census and assessment numbers for our Meeting, which have sometimes differed but do not differ this year (36 total persons). Using the new census figure of 36 would reduce the budgeted SAYMA dues amount, or we could set SAYMA dues as a set amount of our budget. David

Clements noted that, if SAYMA dues go up, we could make an adjustment for this in the 2012 budget. A Friend suggested keeping this amount steady in this year but that we consider these and other expenditures (in pie chart form) for the coming budget year.

We re-discussed the expenditure of Peace & Earth General Outreach funds, which are mostly in escrow until the end of the fiscal year. The Finance Committee asked that monies be expended within a fiscal year, though they can be expended at the end. Peace & Earth noted that it is difficult to expend funds in 12th month as that is a busy time for the committee. Friends noted that this practice creates problems for the Finance Committee but is essential to the spirit of the committee and Meeting.

A Friend recommended that expenditures be based completely on income from the previous year. A Friend asked that all listen carefully to monthly reports from committees, allowing us to consider the overall budget on a month-by-month basis rather than just in 12th month. The Clerk noted that this and many comments were useful for long-range planning, then asked Friends to limit their comments to particular line items from the proposed 2011 budget.

The Meeting decided to approve the amended budget (with changed to the RE budget) absent the Director's Insurance.

Finance Committee will report about the Director's Insurance item to next month's Meeting for Business (including the current cost of such insurance).

Treasurer's Report (Pat Johnson)

Pat noted that deposits of \$893 have not yet been reported, along with some rental income. Thus, the total income so far is \$2030.30, which means that we are on track so far to meet our 2011 budget. So far, we have expenditures of \$0 (not \$408) for outreach.

The Treasurer's Report was accepted as presented.

Rental Policy (Adrienne Weir)

Adrienne assessed the approximate cost of occupying the Meetinghouse (for the Meeting and for rental parties) to determine the cost per hour use of the property, which is approximately \$10 per hour on average. Adrienne noted that some users were grandfathered in at the \$7.50/hour rate or did not pay full rates (since they were Meeting-associated), and that the Meeting did not pay for use of the space. Thus, the rental rate will now be \$15/hour for non-Meeting groups, and \$7.50/hour (50% discount) for Meeting-associated groups. Adrienne noted that she is interested in this field of study (cost of use), so that this process, though time-consuming, had been rewarding for her.

The Meeting thanked Adrienne for bringing our rental policies into sound practice.

Religious Education – Joy Gossett, Paola Villatoro-Weir

Paola is applying for a Study Abroad Italy Program (and SAI scholarships) to study culinary and visual arts next year. The RE committee shared a letter of recommendation that they had written.

A Friend recommended that we support Paola from our AFM scholarship fund as well. AFM decided not to mention this in the letter, as it might hurt her scholarship chances. The letter will be signed by RE members as the requirements indicate that the letter should be from a professional contact; we are writing this letter as her employer.

The Meeting approved a letter of recommendation for Paola Villatoro-Weir, who is applying to Study Abroad Italy.

We thanked Robin and Joy for writing this letter and encouraged Paola to apply for scholarship funds from the Meeting.

Nominating Committee – Gjeorge Gjelfriend

The Meeting approved Gerald (Steve) Stevens as a member of the House & Grounds Committee.

House and Grounds Committee – Gjeorge Gjelfriend

The 30-page report of our House Inspection is now posted on the Meeting website, with an estimated cost of \$5,000-10,000 for meeting the recommended repair costs. Gjeorge reminded us that House and Grounds items should be given to him in written form outside of the Meeting for Business time. Gjeorge and Adrienne agreed to report back to MFB as progress was made on these projects, and Adrienne noted that contract bid proposals and estimates would be reported back to MFB. Adrienne clarified that contractors were chosen based on persons' association with AFM or AFM members.

The Meeting approved House & Grounds use of Meetinghouse Improvement funds (\$20,069) to pay for inspection-recommended repairs to the facility and grounds.

The Meeting approved House & Grounds use of Meetinghouse Improvement funds (\$20,069) to pay for potential repairs to the furnaces.

Ministry and Counsel Committee – Kristi Gjelfriend

M&C asks that each committee set aside time during the year for conversations about long-range planning, and then give a committee report to MFB about those ideas. This will allow those at the 11th month Clerks' Meeting to make better decisions about action/budget items for the future of the Meeting; this information will also inform a more comprehensive annual State of the Meeting Report.

A Friend noted that, in the past, many committees had reported to MFB even if they did not have action items. This is a way for committees to communicate about the life of the Meeting to a larger audience.

Other

Adrienne will meet up with a visiting Friend from Maine on 24 February; this Friend plans to relocate to Asheville.

We will have a retreat with Dan Snyder at the Meetinghouse on Saturday, 30 April. Please contact Steve if you would like to help plan this retreat.

Phil Neal is now a member of Swannanoa Friends Meeting, and he had a major fall in December. He would appreciate more opportunities for socialization and for getting out. Calls are always welcome, and Thursdays are a particularly good day for him to get out.

Closing Worship