

## Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

### Asheville Friends Meeting

12<sup>th</sup> Month 8, 2013

Clerk: Jen Rhode Ward

Recording Clerk: Steve Livingston

Attendance: Nancy Kuykendall, Ruth Stewart, Rylin Hansen, Kristi Gjelfriend, George Gjelfriend, Jim Cavener, David Clements, Margaret Normile, Patti Hughes, Rusty Maynard, Bobby Carter, Joy Gossett, Alan Robinson, Barbara Esther, Adrienne Weir, Jim and Gail Hipkins, Gita Larson, Laura Maynard Lane, Pat Johnson, Robin Wells

Meeting began at with a moment of silence at 12:15 p.m.

The clerk shared a quote from Nelson Mandela: "Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all. Let each know that, for each, the body, the mind, and the soul have been freed to fulfill themselves."

The agenda was approved as posted with one addition.

**Minutes of 11<sup>th</sup> month meeting were approved as posted on the website.**

#### Workshop

Gail Hipkins thanked Meeting for sending her to clerking workshop at Pendle Hill.

#### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Pat Johnson reported that the draft budget distributed last month does not have to be approved until next month, and pointed out changes made since last month.

1. Meeting computer is inoperative and will be recycled. Finance Committee will need to obtain a new computer and needs to update Quickbooks. Finance Committee is looking for a donated computer with Windows 7 or later operating system. Failing that, the Committee will purchase a computer. A Friend inquired why the latest version of Quickbooks is needed. Another Friend explained the need for support and security. A Friend suggested that given the low cost of a new computer, we should just go ahead and get one. Another Friend suggested we get a laptop instead of desktop. Pat pointed out that \$300 has been added to the Finance Committee budget line to cover this cost.
2. Peace and Earth Committee has made its annual allocations for outreach, including a small donation for Stephanie's Africa project and another new one

for the two outdoor dramas at Snow Camp, NC.

Pat also reported progress in migrating our checking account away from Wells Fargo. All that need be done is to get the rest of the outstanding checks written on the Wells Fargo account and signing the necessary papers with Self Help Credit Union. Pat reported that two other smaller credit unions have joined with Self Help Credit Union, making our future banking more convenient. Another Friend reported that there are two more that provide banking services to Self Help Credit Union.

Pat provided a review of our fund balances.

A Friend asked about proper channels for requesting additional funding for Stephanie Gossett's reading project in Swaziland.

### Request for Funding

George Gjelfriend observed that Meeting has about \$80,000 in the two Meeting House funds, and no concrete plans to put the money to use. He recalled that last year, we were led to allocate a large sum of money - \$8000 – to build a water well in Vietnam. He proposed that Peace and Earth be asked to find a similar geographically distant project to fund in the coming year.

George suggested as possible beneficiaries either buying Palestinian olive oil and donating it to Manna Food Bank or funding Stephanie Gossett's reading project.

Clerk of House and Grounds noted that we do have some very long range plans that might call for spending as much as \$80,000 but not nearly so much in the nearer term. She indicated support for George's proposal. Another Friend spoke for a different, more local choice of beneficiaries. Friend suggested an ad hoc committee to examine choices that benefit our own community, such as “Faith and Play” (a Montessori-inspired resource from FGC that helps children find words and images for expressing their experiences of holy mystery and wonder in their lives).

A Friend proposed that the Alice Brown fund be used for purposes proposed by George rather than Meeting House funds.

Another Friend suggested reviving long range planning committee to discern where money would best come from for this purpose. The Friends expressed gratitude for George's “putting a burr under our saddle” to get us thinking about letting go of some of our money to help others far away.

A Friend recalled Alice's consistent support of individuals in the Meeting with strong leadings, and asked that this be considered in use of Alice Brown Fund. The Friend asked that decision making about whom to support be an open process.

A Friend noted that Meeting has been powerfully energized by Stephanie's Africa work,

after feeling for a time that we were having little impact in the wider world. The Friend pointed out the urgency of need for funding her current project. Another Friend noted that the amount being suggested is in keeping with the amount we donated for the well in Vietnam.

Clerk noted support for George's suggestion for a sizable donation, and support for long range visioning. But Friends were not in unity as to the recipient of the funds, nor about the source of the funds.

Clerk of Spiritual Enrichment pointed out that this month has five first days, and suggested that our usual fifth first day letter writing might be deferred if we decided to revive the long range visioning process.

Considering the urgency of Stephanie's need, a Friend suggested that we donate some few thousands to Stephanie immediately, and then later decide whether, and how much, and to whom, to donate additional funds.

On further consideration, Friends were moved to “get on with it”, as Alice Brown used to say.

**Friends approved allocating \$6291 out of the Alice Brown Fund to support Stephanie's reading project in Swaziland.**

### Peace and Earth

Patti Hughes presented a proposal for responding to Swannanoa Valley's Palestine Minute. With one minor change, the response letter was approved. Text of letter:

Asheville Friends Meeting is grateful to our friends at Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting for proposing the Minute Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. While we are not united at this time on the Minute we will continue our query and investigation. It is a beginning for us and has enlightened our discussions concerning the inequalities inherent in the Middle East conflict.

We have been sparked to take some actions toward support of peace work in the Middle East.

- Two lengthy discussions including a slide presentation on the complexities of cultural and religious diversity of this area.
- Asheville Friends Meeting representation at the film series sponsored by Western Carolinians for Peace in the Middle East.
- Support of growers and producers in the West Bank region of Palestine through purchase and sale of their products.

- Peace And Earth Committee has been charged with our continued inquiry and follow up steps.

**Friends approved sending this letter to Swannanoa Valley Friends and to SAYMA.**

Pat Johnson presented an appeal to join with other faith communities in the “Beyond Coal” initiative. She read the open letter to Duke Energy that has been posted on our website, and reviewed need for support of letter. She informed us that currently 11 faith communities' leaders have signed on as supporting this letter. She recommended that Friends approve Meeting signing on with these other faith communities' leaders.

A Friend expressed discomfort with the notion that we are a “faith community”: what does that mean? The Friend was troubled by the focus of the letter on Duke's culpability without putting responsibility on the individuals who purchase and use Duke's product. The Friend felt that the letter was nothing more than “symbolic posturing”, and wondered how much more of a difference it might make if instead of asking them to shut down their coal plant, we asked them to distribute the toxic coal ash to their consumers in proportion to each consumer's use. The Friend was also uncomfortable with only the clerk signing on, and asked that if we approve the letter, we all sign it.

The Friend pointed out that best way to reduce use of fossil fuels is greater efficiency. Does Duke really want us to reduce our use of energy? Another Friend noted the importance of working at many levels to address fossil fuel problem, this petition being only one of them.

A Friend asked whether Duke was still burning coal at Asheville plant. Suggested they might have already switched over to natural gas. The Friend suggested that they are not paying the full cost of the fuels they use, citing the environmental destruction they cause, like the ash pond that collapsed in TN.

**Friends approved clerk signing the open letter to Duke Energy on behalf of the Meeting. Friends approved sending the letter inviting other faith communities to sign onto the open letter.**

Pat introduced Friends to Pear Energy, a marketer of Renewable Energy Certificates to whom she subscribes. For an extra two cents per kwh of electricity she uses, Pear Energy says that they purchase an equal number of kwh's of electricity from renewable energy producers.

Board of Directors

David Clements explained the makeup and role of the Board. David reported that the Board met this morning, and the Board approved the corporate resolution to switch our banking from Wells Fargo to Self Help Credit Union.

Friends accepted the report.

### Request for Marriage

Clerk read letter requesting marriage of Alan Robinson and Dave Spicer under care of Asheville Meeting. The letter suggested that the time was right for these Friends to proceed with their marriage. (*letter has not been made available to recording clerk at this time*)

Alan requested Barbara Esther, Bob Smith, Kitti Reynolds, and Katherine Kowal to serve on their clearness committee. Barbara agreed to serve. Clerk Jen Rhode Ward will check with the others.

### Holiday Activities

Barbara Esther proposed an informal gathering to take place after rise of Meeting next week. Bring cookies to share amongst ourselves. Hot and cold cider, holiday cards for decorating and sending to older or shut in Friends and friends.

Barbara also announced that Spiritual Enrichment Committee would meet on fourth Sunday. The Committee is keeping open to Friends concerns, wanting to respond to energy and needs of the Meeting rather than trying to map out the adult program far in advance.

### Other Business

Laura expressed support for Quaker process, even when it seems lengthy or perhaps frustrating.

Steve Livingston reported his correspondence with our neighbor Linda Welsh concerning Frank Roberts.

“Wondered if you'd noticed Frank is gone.”

“Oh yes, and peace prevails. Many thanks and please extend my gratitude to the meeting.”

“It was a long a very difficult road to travel. I regret that it was a trial for you as well, and hope that our future interactions will be entirely pleasant. As Providence would have it, our Meeting has joined in an effort through Hope to Home supporting a formerly homeless person's transition to independent living. Just a few days after Frank was evicted from the premises, one of our Ministry and Counsel members hosted her for Thanksgiving dinner.”

### Closing worship

There being no further business, meeting adjourned with silence at 1:50 p.m.