

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Asheville Friends Meeting

3rd Month 8, 2015

Co-Clerks: Gail Hipkins, Alan Robinson

Recording Clerk: Steve Livingston

Attendance: Gjeorge and Kristi Gjelfriend, Patti Hughes, Patti Burgess, Hannah Burgess, Tim Burgess, Jim Cavener, Edie Patrick, Pat Johnson, Edwin Brown, Nancy Kuykendall, Joy Gossett, Katherine Kowal, Rusty Maynard, Rylin Hansen, Desaray Smith, Sharon Smith, Barbara Esther, Jim Barham, Ruth Stewart

Clerk began meeting at 12:05 p.m. with a reading from "The Faith and Practice of the Quakers" by Rufus M. Jones:

John Wilhelm Rowntree of York finished a moving address in the Manchester Conference in 1895 with this prayer: "Thou, O Christ, convince us by thy Spirit, thrill us with Thy Divine passion, drown our selfishness in Thy invading love, lay on us the burden of the world's suffering, drive us forth with the apostolic fervor of the early Church!"

Friends approved the agenda as presented.

Friends approved minutes of twelfth month 2014 minutes and of second month 2015 as posted on the Meeting website.

Treasurer's Report

Pat J reported our income so far is just shy of \$3000, and expenditures have been incurred for House and Grounds, utilities, office supplies, and childcare amounting to less than \$2000, so we are at this point in the black.

Pat also mentioned that she attended the Martin Luther King Jr. Prayer Breakfast in Black Mountain and noted that the cost for an ad in their program is very reasonable. In response to a Friend's inquiry, she also noted that the Swannanoa Valley Friends did not have an ad in this program.

Pat pointed out that her term of Treasurer is soon to end, and invited interested Friends to contact Nominating Committee asap so there will be time for orientation.

Friends accepted the Treasurer's Report.

State of Meeting Report

Clerk read a second draft of the report, admonishing Friends that the report had to be submitted today, and that therefore there was not time to address middling concerns. She asked that Friends seek opening to approve the report unless there were serious

concerns with the content.

[insert report here]

Friends asked that references to “verbal” ministry be changed to “vocal” ministry.

Some Friends were concerned about the reference to political statements given as vocal ministry. Where is the boundary between personal and political? Clerks pointed out that the concern was raised in the past year and this is a discussion we need to have in the coming year.

A Friend asked if we might include the fact that associate member Lydia Hearne gave birth to a child in 2014. Clerk took the opportunity to remind Friends of the need for a Recorder and Archivist for the Meeting. Barbara E indicated that she has agreed to take on the role of Recorder.

A Friend asked that the reference to the school we helped to finance in Swaziland be changed to reflect that the students are of preschool age.

Friends united in gratitude to the clerks for preparing the second draft. A Friend asked as a point of order what is the process for one who has concerns about the report. Clerk explained the difference between standing aside and standing in the way.

Friends approved the State of Meeting report as presented with the three changes mentioned above.

AFSC Report

Patti H reported on the 2015 Annual Meeting of AFSC Corporation in Philadelphia, "Radical Hospitality" There were weather related challenges but Friends persevered and by opening of business on Friday the meeting room was full. She explained the difference between the larger Corporation body with Yearly Meeting Reps. and Members at Large with the Board being a smaller portion of this body.

The meeting takes place at Friends Center with full group meetings in the Race Street Meeting Room. There was time to break into smaller groups, and for people to meet face to face who had previously only associated electronically.

There was a moment of remembrance for the 50th anniversary of the events in Selma.

The group honored Dan Seeger Honored Dan Seeger for his work with AFSC and his historic Supreme Court victory that enabled Conscientious Objection for non-theists. He is clerk of committee Patti is now serving on. One program session she attended was presented by Jennifer Bing, of the AFSC Chicago Office and 3 Young Palestinian Women. (All females because Palestinian male youth are not allowed to travel) One is a citizen of Israel, one is from the West Bank, and one is from Gaza. The young woman

from Gaza spoke of her experience as a teen when bombing began in Gaza. Being in the presence of these women was very moving.

Other program sessions were on Immigration and the Working to End Mass Incarceration. The Liaison Program which began no long ago is already evolving.

As a tourist in the snowy city getting around was challenging but made for a more peaceful experience than usual.

Racial Justice ad hoc committee

Sharon S proposed that AFM create a racial justice committee. She reported on the two worship sharings that have been held, with good attendance at both. Those involved were united that Meeting should form this new standing committee. All present were willing to serve, and Sharon is confident that once the committee rises, there will be no shortage of work to do.

A Friend asked if we were being offered a formal proposal to raise up this committee. Another Friend asked if those involved had considered being part of Peace and Earth. Peace and Earth clerk reminded Friends that the committee had already advised the Meeting that the racial justice committee should be a separate entity.

Clerk recalled that those involved have not yet discerned the specific charge of the committee, that there is a sense that Sharon S be named as convener of the committee, and offer a proposal for the committee's charge. Clerk suggested that once the committee had worked out the charge, it would be brought back to the Meeting for approval.

Friends approved the Racial Justice Committee as a standing committee of Asheville Friends Meeting, with Sharon Smith as convener.

Peace and Earth

Pat J reported that what used to be Green Congregations is now Creation Care Alliance of WNC, and is affiliated with mountaintrue dot org, which has raised enough money to hire a director. Our Meeting is asked to become a formal member of CCA. She read the statement of purpose of CCA. Four major foci: inspiration (gratitude, hope, and awe), education, service, and advocacy.

Pat recounted the work done by the group in the recent past. She indicated that a donation of \$100-1000 would be appropriate from the Meeting.

Peace and Earth recommends that we become members of the organization. Katherine K noted that we would be making commitments beyond simple membership. How will this affect our Meeting community? What does it mean to “do what we can” to address sustainability?

A Friend noted his concern that there be space in the org for those who don't identify with the idea of an entity guiding Creation, but rather the belief that it is entirely a natural processes. Pat reassured him that others within the org share this concern. She acknowledged the difficulty of finding the appropriate inclusive wording.

A Friend asked why there is a necessity to affiliate with this group when there is already so much we can do on our own. He asked whether we have the energy to participate in efforts identified by an outside group. Might it be in better order for us to have a committee or subcommittee to address the concerns that this group brings? What additional responsibilities does this put on us? Pat responded that in terms of action and advocacy in the wider world, there is strength in numbers.

A Friend pointed out that the term "Creation Care" has come to have wider use among Quakers, adding that our SPICE acronym for the five testimonies is acquiring a second S, standing for "stewardship of Creation". He acknowledged that putting the G-word before "Creation" makes him uneasy as well, but that should not deter us from participation. The hardest thing is the responsibility of "doing something" rather than just agreeing with various positions. The Friend united with the strength in numbers.

A Friend suggested we needed more time to season this request. It sounds good, we're united with their concerns, but the question of membership goes beyond the mere question of agreement or support. As a member of several other groups, he queried why the Meeting shouldn't take on membership with them. Pat suggested that this group is different because they are coming from a faith perspective.

Clerk asked for silence, then noted that there are unresolved issues, that we are not ready to unite as a community. Asked that the recommendation be returned to Peace and Earth for further seasoning, and come back to next month's meeting with a recommendation. A Friend pointed out that it is the community as a whole that needs to season it, not the committee. She asked whether we could have a worship sharing session on the question.

A Friend noted that if our Meeting joins this organization, that it does not put any additional responsibility on any one member of the community. She noted that there is no umbrella agency over the various secular environmental advocacy organizations.

Pat pointed out that in the last month, FCNL met with CCA to inquire about affiliation.

Clerks asked whether we were prepared to unite, or not unite, with the recommendation of Peace and Earth, or if we should hold over til next month, with an intervening worship sharing. A Friend offered that we could hold it over to next meeting even without an intervening event. A Friend asked that she have the opportunity to investigate the group and their stated positions more thoroughly before making a decision.

Recording clerk will post info on the website and send out to business meeting

adttenders.

A Friend offered a perspective that Creation evolves outside of the initial act of Creation.

A Friend asked if there was a second hour available in an upcoming First Day, but the schedule is full for the near future. Recording clerk offered that the documents will be posted on the website and sent to business meeting attenders.

Personal Concern

There were no personal concerns brought forward.

Closing worship

There being no further business, meeting adjourned with silence at 1:36 p.m.