

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Asheville Friends Meeting
4th Month 12, 2015

Clerk: Gail Hipkins

Recording Clerk: Steve Livingston

Attendance: Rylin Hansen, Sharon Smith, Kristi Gjelfriend, Jim Hipkins, Gjeorge Gjelfriend, Katherine Kowal, Jim Cavener, Bobby Carter, Pat Johnson, Nancy Kuykendall, Sarah Jane Thomas, Margaret Normile, Patti Hughes, Robin Wells

Clerk began meeting at 11:55 a.m. with a reading from the Pendle Hill pamphlet "Beyond Consensus" by Barry Morley:

Partly because of its rarity, sense of the meeting is a gift of enormous worth, more valuable perhaps than any other Quaker gift or practice. Quakers are not the only people who worship in silence. They are not alone in waiting for continuing revelation by attending to the Light within.... But where, except among Friends, has the practice of discovering the sense of the meeting become so entrenched?

Friends approved the agenda as presented.

Friends deferred approval of 3rd month minutes until next meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Pat J distributed the Treasurer's Report. Our total annual income to date is about 20% of our annual budget, so we are doing well for the year so far. A lot of receipts have been turned in so far, and we have now paid our SAYMA dues for the year, so expenditures exceed income somewhat.

Pat informs us that a "smile" account has been set up on Amazon, so Friends can make a donation to the charity of your choice every time you make an Amazon purchase. A Friend pointed out that Amazon itself is notorious for supporting right-wing causes.

Friends accepted the Treasurer's Report.

SAYMA Announcement

SAYMA has wonderful and varied opportunities for service. To serve on a committee or in other ways in the Yearly Meeting is a great opportunity to get to know other Quakers and feel more a part of SAYMA. The SAYMA Nominating Committee has a big job finding people to fill positions of responsibility including officers, committees members and clerks, representatives to Wider Quaker Organization, and other positions.

SAYMA covers a large geographic area and we don't all know each other. This makes it

difficult for the SAYMA Nominating Committee to fit Friends with positions where they want to serve. We have created a short survey that will help the Nominating Committee identify Friends and learn their gifts and desires. This will help the committee ask Friends to serve where they are most led.

The survey seeks information about Friends themselves and others they might recommend for service. The information will be shared with the nominating committee and SAYMA officers, but not further.

Clerk offered written copies of the survey for any Friend who is interested in serving.

State of Communications Committee Report

1. Before an item is presented for agenda of Meeting for Business, has it has been properly seasoned? How can we use Committee structure to better season issues before Meetings for Business? *Committee did not respond to this query*

2. Most Committees are small; do you need more members?

Currently the committee consists of Leslee Johnson and Steve Livingston (clerk). We do need more members and Steve has expressed a concern about being associated with a particular role (ie websteward) indefinitely. We need more people with the interests and skillsets to cover some of the responsibilities of this committee (ie enter new people on the listserv, or update the Facebook Page.) Leslee can continue sending out the weekly email, but cannot assume the website responsibilities or take over Steve's role as websteward. We need to figure out how to reach out to more people to be on this committee and/or do some of the work.

Do you have suggestions for new members?

We thought of several Friends who might be good candidates. We are going to make some initial contacts with these folks and if they are willing to serve with us, make our recommendations to the nominating committee.

3. Is this Committee fully functional? How might it be improved?

By adding more members to share in the work. There are also some information gaps; too few of us know how things work. We don't have enough information about sharing the Meeting's communication network, such as how google voice works, all the passwords, how to get into the website. Our documentation needs to be compiled and shared in the form of communications protocols. Speaking of protocols, our Facebook presence is piecemeal and as a committee we have never devised any guidelines about how to use FB. But the bottom line is: to make our committee more effective and functional, we need more members.

4. How often is our website and listserv updated? How can we assure that all info stays up to date?

We do our best, but we need one or two more people on the committee with an hour or two a month to devote to some maintenance tasks.

5. How can we assure that everyone receives communications, minutes, and notices?

We can't. We can make the information available and accessible, but ultimately it is up to each individual to keep informed. We do understand our responsibility to update and keep the listserv and website current. However, some of the responsibility of disseminating important events and information falls to people in other committees. With a fleshed out communications committee we would like to revive some sort of newsletter to attach to the weekly email once every month or two.

6. Is there tension in this Committee? Is there any evidence of sexism or racism, such as a strong division of labor in carrying out tasks? If so, what can we do about it?

We want to avoid gender-based assignments, so we seek to add more women, especially tech savvy ones.

7. Should Committees meet monthly, no matter what? Why or why not?

No. Maybe for some it is important. We need to meet more often than we do. With more people we would seek to meet a few times a year as needed.

8. Do your meetings need more privacy? If so, how might that be arranged?

No.

State of the Religious Education Committee Report

1. How can we provide more opportunity for worship of those who are serving, such as child care and First Day School workers?

Though we discussed the fact that we might all enjoy more regular opportunities to participate in silent worship, we feel as a group that our service upstairs is something that we have taken upon ourselves and we try to communicate internally as to individual needs so that we can structure our time to do what needs doing. If too great a number of adults rotated through the toddler room or First Day School, it may be difficult to monitor the quality or continuity of instruction. With a few, committed and regular adults, we are able to easily communicate and plan the curriculum as we proceed through the year.

2. It has been suggested that we may need more feedback or assistance from parents regarding childcare; is this Committee in agreement? If so, how could that be effected at AFM? What other human resources are needed to cover all areas of your responsibility?

We have tried to reach out to parents of children over the course of the year to hear

what is on their minds and to discuss possible improvements to the childcare at AFM. We do have some limitations as to space, since children younger than 2.5 cannot be upstairs without a parent and the downstairs wiggle room cannot contain a toddler. We are in the midst of trying to hire a new childcare provider for upstairs. In the meantime, parents of children under 2.5 years have had to be more directly involved. When asked, they have said that they appreciate the chance to be in community with other young parents and don't mind what they deem to be a temporary phase in their lives. It is proving difficult to find a childcare provider because many people either go to church during this time or it's not worth it to them to commit their Sunday morning.

3. Before an item is presented for agenda of Meeting for Business, has it been properly seasoned? How can we use Committee structure to better season issues before Meetings for Business?

RE has not brought anything to Meeting for Business. Someone on our committee had the idea of asking an appointed person from Ministry & Counsel to stand up every Sunday during announcements and say "If you have a concern that you would like to bring to Meeting for Business, please come find me after rise of worship." That person would then have the job of assigning those concerns to particular committees for seasoning.

4. Most Committees are small; do you need more members? Do you have suggestions for new members? If so, has this been discussed with the Nominating Committee Clerk?

We would like to gauge the interest of Patty, who has recently become involved upstairs. We have been known to carry out these committee invitations ourselves.

5. Is this Committee fully functional? How might be improved?

We are fully functional in that we carry out the tasks of delivering religious education, but we have not been consistent in our meetings and in our communication to members. We are not even exactly sure who our true members are. We could surely improve as a committee by having more meetings at regular intervals – at least quarterly. We could also do a better job of including all committee members in communications about meetings and including a representative from the youth group in meetings.

6. Is there tension in this Committee? Is there any evidence of sexism or racism, such as a strong division of labor in carrying out tasks? If so, what can we do about it?

The only tension that we have experienced this year is the lack of transparency in people's intentions. Our members care for each other and want to make sure that no one feels imposed upon by having to be upstairs. This may sometimes be interpreted such that someone feels like a dispensable part of the team.

7. Should Committees meet monthly, no matter what?

Committees should decide to meet when it is realistic for them to do so. However, we were glad to be assigned the task of answering these questions as a reason to check in.

8. Do your meetings need more privacy? If so, how might that be arranged?

No, we do not need more privacy. Fence in back area to provide outdoor child care

Ministry and Counsel: not had a chance to answer the queries. 4 or 5 people with very different backgrounds and different skill sets. Concerning the peace dove in the meeting room, Alan R will report on that next month.

State of Peace and Earth Committee Report

Peace and Earth considered the clerks' survey at our regularly scheduled meeting on March 15.

1. Are items properly seasoned?

We feel that they are. We discuss all items in committee before presenting them to Meeting for Business.

2. Do you need more members?

We have six working members and feel that this is just the right amount.

3. Is the committee fully functional?

Yes.

4. Is there tension in the committee?

No. We do admit to a bit of sexism. Bobby Carter does all the "heavy lifting" in bringing the MANNA barrel and its contents back and forth.

5. Should committees meet monthly?

We have always met monthly and feel all committees should at least schedule monthly meetings. If there is no work for the committee that month, they can always cancel the meeting but we feel if meetings are not scheduled at a regular time, they tend not to occur until a crisis erupts.

6. Do your meetings need more privacy?

Our meetings are always open. We meet in the library before meeting for worship and have very little privacy. However, this has never been a problem.

7. Suggestions for further projects.

We are not currently considering one-on-one meetings. We do continue to review our letter-writing campaign because it gets very little support from the Meeting. We are also currently trying to find a volunteer project that would involve the Meeting as a whole (such as the sponsorship of a Hope to Home participant.)

In response to an inquiry, Katherine explained that letter writing takes place in second hour when there is a fifth first day in the month, and it is often announced the week before.

Creation Care Alliance: Katherine reviewed the CCA info from last month. Six

requirements of membership:

1. Endorse the four CCAWNC guiding principles, inspiration, education, service, and advocacy.
2. Appoint at least one congregational representative to attend bimonthly CCAWNC meetings.
3. Schedule a CCAWNC adult education class, workshop or worship event about caring for creation.
4. Contribute to CCAWNC with a suggested annual donation ranging from \$100 - \$1000 that is consistent with the resources of our congregation.
5. Pledge to make specific changes that will move our congregation toward sustainability.
6. Share our creation care experiences with the CCAWNC network.

Pat informed us that the moneys from donations are used primarily for outreach, and there is now a paid director. A Friend observed that the new name seemed to turning the org more towards ecumenical, but Pat pointed out that the former name “Green Congregations” was less inclusive. Clerk noted that the term “Creation Care” has come to encompass all kinds of environmental concerns from a more spiritual perspective.

Friends approved Asheville Friends Meeting joining Creation Care Alliance.

Racial Justice

Sharon Smith reported for the committee. At their first meeting, they approved a “mission statement”: to address individual, cultural, and institutional White Supremacy/racism within AFM, Asheville, and SAYMA.

Members of the committee include: Jim B, Scotty U, Nancy K, Lauren A, Edie P, Rylin H. Co clerks Sharon S and Desaray S.

The Committee has agreed to co-sponsor showing of film “Connections” with Care and Nurture.

Some Friends were uncomfortable with the term “White Supremacy”, feeling that it is a polarizing expression, wondering whether it should be included in the mission statement, questioning whether it is a part of the racism in our Society. A Friend suggested that White Supremacy in this context is an attitude that arises from racism rather than a social movement that we often associate with particularly unsavory right-wing groups. Sharon reminded us that our American society is founded on genocide, theft, and slavery perpetrated by our White ancestors upon People of Color, that is what

White Supremacy is all about.

A Friend expressed from her experience with the Black community that racism exists equally among people of color as among Whites. Sharon described that the term “racism” cannot rightly be applied to a person of color because by definition, racism arises from a position of power and is inflicted upon oppressed people.

A Friend suggested that we needed more time to season concerns raised about the term before it is published. A Friend observed that the energy of the discussion suggested that this is a discussion we need to have.

Clerk suggested that we have a threshing session to address the concern. Sharon assured Friends that the committee will be providing educational opportunities for us including a workshop being developed for presentation at Yearly Meeting.

Hospitality

Clerk read a report from Edie P, the sole remaining member of the committee, and not clerk. Edie thanked members of the meeting for stepping up to help. The sign up sheet that goes around at rise of meeting each week has been extremely helpful, but there is still a need for a volunteer to start hot beverages when it's time for joys and concerns.

As a former member of the committee, Margaret N commended meeting for keeping up with responsibilities of snacks, greeting, cleanup.

Care and Nurture

Margaret N reported for the committee. Care and Nurture meets on the first Sunday of the month. There are a good number of Friends on the committee but more are welcome. The committee's purpose is to reach out to Friends dealing with difficult health issues or who are unable to attend. Committee meetings are not intended to be exclusionary but attenders are expected to maintain confidentiality when discussing health issues. Responding to clerk's inquiry, Margaret indicated that the committee is afforded sufficient privacy simply by closing the door where they are meeting.

The committee intends to revive the emergency contact list and the “buddy” system. Seasoning in committee is thorough, for example in their decision not to take responsibility for the sign up sheet.

The committee will be presenting “The Connection”, a film about improving overall health through mindfulness based stress reduction, meditation, and staying “in the moment”. Margaret stated that there is now a great body of evidence supporting these methods to improve and sustain good health. The film will be shown on a Saturday night to be announced. A Friend offered to bring powered speakers. Another Friend extolled the film in that it provides scientific support for ancient wisdoms and advised that stress reduction will be very helpful for us as we embark on anti-racism work.

Nominating

Nominating currently has no clerk and committee needs new members. Can a Naming Committee rise up? Steve L volunteered to convene the committee.

Personal Concerns

A Friend commended the clerks for putting together the questionnaire. Clerk pointed out that it came about out of discussion at all clerks meeting.

Closing worship

There being no further business, meeting adjourned with silence at 1:25 p.m.