

**Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Asheville Friends Meeting**

Eleventh Month 13, 2016

Present: Adrienne Weir; Jim Cavener; Margaret Normile; Katherine Kowal; Sharon Smith; Sarah Jane Thomas; Paul Hibschan; Pat Johnson; Bobby Carter; Christopher Foreman; Kitti Reynolds; Nick Mimken; Nickette Jayne; Rusty Maynard; Jim Barham; Steve Livingston; Bob Lackey; Alan Robinson; Patti Hughes, Clerk; Barbara Esther, Recording Clerk.

Meeting began with a period of silent worship from which clerk, Patti Hughes, read the following:

LOVE

Our capacity to love the difficult parts of ourselves and others is the foundation upon which our practice of peace is built. But love is never easy and requires of us an ongoing willingness to be challenged, broken open, and changed.

Love takes everything we've got, but it is also the primary power we have to transform the escalating violence of these times. Martin Luther King Jr., said that violence is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy...adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

from *Practicing Peace* Catherine Whitmore

Friends accepted the agenda as prepared with some rearrangement of agenda items to accommodate Friends needs. The original order reflected the order in which Friends submitted their reports.

Announcements:

A card was received thanking us for attention to the transfer of membership of Friends Susan and Greg Mitchell to Salem Oregon Monthly Meeting. They expressed welcome to any Friends traveling to central Oregon.

As we could not come to unity on a minute of appreciation for the out-going clerks, Ministry and Counsel Committee asked that Friends send their thanks personally to our out-going clerks.

We are planning to have a Holiday Party on December 18th. planning will involve both Religious Education Committee and Spiritual Enrichment Committee, but others interested are welcome to participate in the planning.

Minute 1: Friends approved Tenth Month Minutes as printed.

The clerk reported that Quaker process was not followed in our meeting for business in August 2016, after an ad hoc committee discussed the situation. First of all, the report from the Racial Justice Committee would have been seasoned had it been sent to committees in advance of our business meeting. In our meeting for business there was not a feeling of openness to the leading of Spirit in approaching the report. We reviewed the proposed changes which will be posted for Friends to look at, with approval of the minutes of the August business being sought in December 2016.

Committee Reports:

Nominating Committee - Nicketie Jayne

The following were presented for our approval:

Laura Wall-Assistant Treasurer

One Friend expressed concern that as a new attender Laura is not well known, and that she might move into the position of Treasurer if Alan steps down. Another Friend expressed her discomfort with the nomination because she, herself, was treated in a way that made her feel talked down to and treated in a racist manner. A Friend asked that we put aside our disagreements with one another, something that all of us have experienced from time to time, in order to proceed with love in our community. Another Friend said that the position of treasurer does not represent authority any more than any other person or clerk; the meeting holds the authority as a body. A Friend shared that serving as clerk or other position presents opportunities to get to know the people of the meeting better and instructs us in listening. Our treasurer spoke as to the skills that Laura possesses as she has been assisting him to date. He has been preparing a list of protocol for the person stepping into the position, recalling the difficult of stepping in when SAYMA's treasurer died precipitously. He was assistant treasurer at that time, and later that year became ill, himself. The ability of the assistant treasurer to step in when needed is important to the continuation of the work. The Friend who felt she was not well treated by the nominee said that she will not stand aside if Laura is asked to serve as treasurer.

Sharon Smith and Margaret Farmer-Communications Committee

Steve Livingston and Lynnora Bierce-Racial Justice Committee

One Friend said that she hoped that Lynnora would be interested in being present more often in our meetings since the work of the meeting for racial justice would be enhanced by her being present among us. As we discern this appointment, it was also noted that Lynnora, as others in our meeting, has been active in some spheres, although regular attendance in worship has not been her choice for some time. She has been active on the Racial Justice Committee.

Pat Johnson-Board of Directors of Asheville Friends Meeting

Katherine Kowal-to receive phone calls to the meeting

Nick Mimken and Sarah Jane Thomas-Emergency Contacts

Minute 2 - The above nominated Friends were approved to serve as listed.

The Nominating Committee is continuing to work on other positions in our meeting that need to be filled. We thank the committee for its work and Nickette for clerking the work of the committee since her approval on the committee.

Racial Justice Committee - Steve Livingston

Present were: Margaret Farmer, Gita Larson, Steve Livingston (recorder), Sharon Smith (clerk), Adrienne Weir

Meeting began at 6:50 p.m. with review of the agenda and our usual practice of checking in with each other as to our growing edge as we learn about, reflect on, and act upon, racism in ourselves and our communities.

The committee discussed the status of Desaray Smith's participation, and particularly her role as co-clerk of the committee. We recalled that when the Racial Justice Committee was being formed, Desaray eagerly answered the call to clerking, but in the subsequent months she did not work well with other committee members. Friends noted that Desaray has not been present at Meeting for Worship in several months, that she has not participated at any level in the work of the committee, that she has not been supportive of the committee's work, that she has in fact engaged in backbiting and public criticism of the committee that has been disruptive of the committee's work in the wider Asheville community and a distraction from the committee's felt mission.

Friends present are convinced, by Desaray's actions and inactions, that she is no longer co-clerking the Racial Justice Committee, and the committee is united in moving forward without her. Sharon assured Friends that she was comfortable clerking the committee except at those times when she is so personally invested in the discussion that she might be led to ask someone else to take on the clerking role. Friends agreed to address this need on an ad hoc basis.

The Committee is led to continue exploring the possibility of Sharon's residence at the Meetinghouse on an interim basis until she can find suitable affordable housing. We are asking Finance Committee to further examine our insurance policy and inquire whether changes are called for that would allow for us to have a resident as we have had in the past and many other Meetings have done historically and continue to do today. We are recommending to House and Grounds suggested upgrades and improvements to the upstairs space that would make it more livable. We are asking Religious Education Committee to consider ways to consolidate First Day School into a smaller area.

At this point Sharon has some couch surfing options but is preparing for the eventuality of occasionally sleeping in her car. Her support committee is working with her and local agencies to find subsidized housing, but waiting lists are long and Winter is coming.

Sharon reported on the progress of our Yearly Meeting's ad hoc Racial Justice Committee. They will meet in Atlanta next weekend, with Sharon co-clerking with Folami Adams of Atlanta Meeting. The committee agreed to provide \$200 to cover Sharon's transportation and meal expenses plus compensation for missing two days of work.

[note: Finance Committee has since informed RJC that Meeting is prohibited from paying compensation]

The Committee resolved to continue raising awareness about racism in our Meeting and in the larger Asheville community. To that end we are exploring possible avenues for racism assessment, either self or professionally. We also resolved to ask Meeting to hold the state of black Asheville in the Light by presenting each week one fact from the State of Black Asheville report.

Lastly, the Committee asks Meeting to approve a minute expressing our concerns and a call to action regarding the SBI report on the shooting of Jerry Williams last summer.

[We are concerned that Meeting's charge to the clerks to disseminate the Minute adopted at the called meeting for business on 7/17 was not fulfilled. To address that concern, we have included the core paragraph from that minute in our proposal]:

On July 2, 2016, Jai Lateef "Jerry" Williams was fatally shot by Asheville Police officer Tyler Radford. On October 28, the NC State Bureau of Investigation released to District Attorney Todd Williams the report of its investigation into the shooting.

[Our hearts are cracked open by the excessive use of force by police in our nation and in our own community, against people of color, especially young black men and Jerry Williams in particular. We acknowledge that this long history of institutionalized violence has repeatedly broken the hearts and shattered the lives of people in our community. We recognize that our silence makes us complicit. If we fail to speak, our silence will be deafening.]

We join with the family and other members of the Asheville community who still grieve for his untimely death, and are frustrated by the lack of clarity as to the events leading up to the fatal shooting.

We call upon the Asheville Police Department to cease and desist from harassing and intimidating the family of Jerry Williams and other members of his community.

We call upon the District Attorney to release the SBI report to the family, along with any and all evidence gathered by or presented to the Asheville Police and the District Attorney's office, including the names of all persons who were interviewed as possible eyewitnesses to the shooting.

We stand united with the family of Jerry Williams if they choose to call for an independent investigation.

We seek nothing more nor less than full disclosure of the facts of the matter, and the swiftest and most certain resolution possible, for the sake of his family, his loved ones, and our Asheville community.

Friends discussed our hope that all the expenses for a Friend traveling to serve will be covered in some way. SAYMA can cover cost after the fact, when receipts are submitted. Sharon could travel with the meeting's debit card with the understanding that receipts would come later for either the monthly meeting or the yearly meeting to reimburse.

Minute 3 - Friends approved sending the above letter to various news magazines: to the Asheville Citizen-Times as a letter to the editor as well as to other local journals and the Los Angeles Times, and wider Quaker bodies including our yearly meeting.

Spiritual Enrichment Committee - Barbara Esther

As we transitioned to the fall schedule Spiritual Enrichment Committee has planned for our meeting adults' benefit it seemed that Friends had forgotten that we have a regularly scheduled program on each first and third First Day, generally between 11:45 and 1:00. During the summer there were no programs planned by the committee, so that Friends could either bring their own program, meet with other Friends for committee work, or simply chat with Friends over snacks.

It has been noted that some committees are scheduling their regular meetings during the second hour on first and third First Days. When that occurs, the program for adults presented that day may be poorly attended. Friends may feel obligated to attend their committee meeting even when they have a keen interest in the topic of the Spiritual Enrichment program. Additionally, the facilitator, having taken care to prepare, will undoubtedly be disappointed if only a few Friends stay for his or her presentation.

Therefore, we request that committee meetings be scheduled for a time other than during those times when a program for Spiritual Enrichment is brought to Friends.

House and Grounds Committee Report -Nick Mimken Clerk of H&G

We have been having discussions and working on the following items:

1. Tree removal and processing for lumber by Christopher Jayne.
2. Gutter rework proposal on porch roof.
3. Energy Audit items review and appropriate implementation.
4. Heating system service and duct repair.
5. Driveway Concrete repair proposal.
6. Researching the Grace Covenant Community Garden successful concept for our meeting.
7. Improving relations with our neighbor.
8. Kudzu removal from our property bordering our neighbor.
9. How to get a commitment from current members/attenders for work days on our property.?

One tree is felled, sawing and projects will follow. The southeast corner needs to be reworked for proper drainage from the rain gutter. Little by little, the items on the energy audit are being addressed. Heating system service and duct repair have been done. The driveway concrete repair proposal is being contemplated, but not firmed up. Communication is underway with those in charge of the project of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church. Concerns center around invasive species such as #8, kudzu, growing where we do not mow. We were reminded that when we describe plants and animals as invasive, we need to remember that many common species came with the Europeans many years ago. The honeybee, for example, is not native to the Americas.

A Friend asked what the status of mold formation in our meetinghouse is after the installation of a plastic barrier. It was explained that without air conditioning and humidity control we will continue to have some mold. Further protection of our books and

attention to the air quality in the house will be handled by the House and Grounds Committee.

Report of the Energy Audit - Pat Johnson [See attachment]

The "Green Team" includes people representing various committees. The report hailed our frugality since we use far less energy and water than many faith groups do.

Finance Committee Report - Pat Johnson

Present: Finance Members: Pat Johnson, Adrienne Weir, David Clements, Bob Smith. Alan Robinson was unable to be present. Visiting: Patti Hughes, Sharon Smith.

1. Committee members and roles
 - a. Clerk of Finance Committee: Pat Johnson. Continues.
 - b. Treasurer: Alan Robinson
 - c. Assistant treasurer: Currently David Clements. Willing to step down if there is a candidate.
 - d. Secretary: David Clements

2. Next Meeting. 12/4/2016, 9 - 10 am.

Action items for Meeting for Business:

1. The Finance Committee recommends to Meeting that Meeting approve paying for a Bookkeeper to help with accounts. We do not have a candidate at this point. We propose \$15 per hour, and would assume an average of 5 hours per month work. We request \$150 for 2016, and \$900 for 2017. We will consult with the Nominating Committee in hiring the person.
2. We ask Meeting to confirm Pat Johnson as a part of the Board of Directors of the Meeting.
3. We ask Meeting to include the Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting in Meeting minutes.

Alan recommends that we not hire a bookkeeper at this time. His reasons are that only one laptop holds our records, all the entries need to be approved by the treasurer. It was explained that the current version of QuickBooks will not allow the use of the software over the internet, as we have done in the past. Another Friend said that all the preliminary work preparing for the bookkeeper to do the work is close to having already done the work. It was felt that someone in the meeting would be the favored person to hire if we decide to do so. The Finance Committee was concerned that we have not had a Treasurer's Report since August.

Report of Asheville Friends Meeting Board of Directors, 11/6/2016

The Board of Directors requests that the minutes of its 2016 annual meeting be incorporated into the minutes of Asheville Friends Meeting. The Annual Meeting of the

AFM Board of Directors took place at the Meeting House on 11/6/2016 at 9:30 am. The Meeting was delayed from the prescribed day, October 2, 2016.

Present were Board members Patti Hughes (Member of the Board *ex officio* as Clerk of Meeting), David Clements (member of the Board *ex officio* as Assistant Treasurer of Meeting), Adrienne Weir, and Bob Smith. Pat Johnson was present, who had been elected by the Board of Directors on 2/7/2016 but not yet confirmed by Meeting. Sharon Smith was also present, who had been approved by Meeting to be a Director but who had not yet been approved by the Board. Alan Robinson, Member of the Board *ex officio* as Treasurer of Meeting, was absent.

We elected David Clements to continue as Secretary. We elected Patti Hughes as Chairperson.

All current members of the Board of Directors are willing to continue. We unanimously elected Pat Johnson and Sharon Smith to the Board. Per procedures specified in the Bylaws, Pat's election requires confirmation by Asheville Friends Meeting. Sharon's election was previously confirmed by Meeting.

Pat, David, Adrienne, Alan, and Gail are signatories for the Self Help Credit Union accounts. We will be adding Patti Hughes as signer and removing Gail.

We will ask to have the minutes of this meeting recorded in the Minutes of Business Meeting.

There being no new business, the Annual Meeting concluded at 9:51 am.

The Bylaws specify, "The Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held at the office of the Friends Meeting on the second Sunday of October of each year." The 2017 Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled for October 8, 2017 at 9 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Clements, Secretary of the Board of Directors.

Treasurer's Report-Alan Robinson

Our income is at about 75% with only two months left in the fiscal year. Although it looks as if we spent almost \$32,000 over budget, this is due to the renovations and the tree felling, both items paid for through funds available, and both unanticipated at the time that the budget was approved.

Friends are reminded that their committee requests for line item funds for the work of their committees are due in the coming week so that the budget for 2017 can be prepared.

Other

A Friend asked whether a Thanksgiving dinner in the meetinghouse is being planned as we have done in the past. One Friend pointed out that she does not celebrate Thanksgiving because, in her opinion, it is more a Thanks-taking for those who are Native Americans.

We closed with a moment of silence to meet again as way opens on Twelfth Month 11, 2016.