

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

Twelfth Month 11, 2016

Present: Rylin Hansen; Adrienne Weir; Margaret Farmer; Jim Cavener; Scotty Utz; Kitti Reynolds; Steve Livingston; Alan Robinson; Jim Barham; Sarah Jane Thomas; Chris Foreman; Rebecca Ledbetter; Paul Hibschan; Bobby Carter; Pat Johnson; Margaret Normile; Nick Mimken; Laura Wall; Patti Hughes, Clerk; Barbara Esther, Recording Clerk.

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

"The Light Within is the fundamental and immediate experience for Friends. It is that which guides each of us in our everyday lives and brings us together as a community of Faith. It is, most importantly, our direct and unmediated experience of the Divine."

from Southeast Yearly Meeting Faith

and Practice

Friends accepted the agenda as prepared.

Announcements:

Manna Food Bank acknowledged the contribution our meeting made to meet the hunger needs of our community, enabling Manna to distribute a total of 15.7 million pounds of food last year.

Membership: George Gjelfriend

Jim Barham wrote a letter requesting membership in AFM. The clearness committee: Robin Wells, George Gjelfriend, Steve Livingston and Gail Hipkins met with Jim and highly recommend that we approve his membership. Friends mentioned his willingness to help set up the meetinghouse for worship on First Days and that he has another religious practice that will not interfere with the full participation in our meeting.

Minute 1: Friends approved Jim Barham's membership in the Religious Society of Friends.

An Ad Hoc Welcoming Committee will organize an official welcoming of our three recent new members. Kitti Reynolds, Margaret Normile and Patti Hughes will plan a welcome party on January 29th, 2017, at rise of meeting.

A Memorial Service for Alan Guokas will be held on December 23, 2016, here at the meetinghouse at 4:00 pm. Margaret Normile will be the contact person and greeter; Bobby Carter And Jim Cavener will set up the meeting room after which

Bobby will assist people as they park their cars. Barbara Esther will read a description of a Friends Memorial Service at the beginning of the service.

Minute 2: Friends read over the August Minutes with some additions and corrections and are working toward approval of the most recent version.

Although names were not attached to statements in the minutes to the satisfaction of all Friends, we were challenged to change our practice of omitting the names of those speaking during discussion and discernment in our meetings for business. Names of those Friends who stand in the way of proposed action are recorded. The proceeding and tone of the meeting in August was unusual, and it has been difficult to reflect all that Friends remember during that meeting.

Minute 3: Friends approved Eleventh Month Minutes with three corrections.

The job of telephone *responder* will substitute for *receiving calls* regarding Katherine Kowal's job. A change was made in the Finance report regarding the inability to use the new Quickbooks software remotely. The readers of the minutes were directed to see a document for the Energy Audit on the HomePage.

Treasurer's Report-Alan Robinson

Our budget is lagging about \$6000 behind with a few weeks remaining in the budget year. We had some extraordinary expenses during 2016, including the tree removal. Because our reported expenditures are not as large as the budgeted amount, we are currently closer to \$3,000 behind. The renovations cost distorts the imbalance of income and expenses. Those expenses show up in the all funds report. The tree removal could be an emergency fund expenditure instead of being a landscaping expense of the House and Grounds Committee.

Friends accepted the report with some uncertainty regarding funds versus budgeted items. The Finance Committee will continue to work on these concerns to clarify the way money is allocated and use is reflected in the reports.

Proposed budget for 2017

While not all committees submitted requests for budgeted funds, a proposed budget looked for a way to balance the budget in terms of what we can expect in the way of contributions and income from invested money and rental income. Our budget practice is to avoid surpassing the income in the previous year, with the understanding that our reserves be sufficient to cover any deficits. We may well receive several large contributions in the next month, if history is to be trusted. Proposed paving of the driveway will cost about \$4000. Finance Committee will consider drawing down our reserves as it finalizes the budget.

Committee Reports:

Racial Justice Committee-Margaret Farmer

Racial Justice Committee Meeting 12/2/16

Present: Sharon Smith, Lauren Adams Adrienne Weir, Lynnora Bierce, Steve Livingston, Gita Larson (by phone)

Meeting began with a few moments of silence. We began meeting with our usual custom of sharing our “growing edge” as we observe and learn about our own racism and racism in our associations and communities.

We acknowledge and lift up the simple and clear definition commonly held by systemic race theorists as “racial prejudice plus institutional power”. We remind the Meeting that the power dynamic of White Supremacy (also as commonly held by systemic race theorists) renders the concept of “reverse racism” as inconceivable. We acknowledge the reluctance or inability of some Friends to understand why every aspect of Meeting life is influenced by racism because we exist within the framework of a White Supremacist paradigm, aka a white supremacist colonial settler nation. We had no choice in being raised to assume white people and white supremacy culture is superior. However, our responsibility, IF we truly want to dismantle racism, is to become aware, acknowledge our assumptions and change our actions.

One of the primary pillars upholding white supremacy, aka racism, is denial. White Supremacy is maintained by controlling the narrative, controlling resources, and controlling processes. As long as white people continue to deny our part in upholding the white supremacist structure, we will continue to be part of the problem.

Racism within the Meeting, whether personal or structural, IS the Meeting's responsibility. Therefore, we ask Friends to seriously consider whether we as a community, are really as committed to providing a safe and welcoming worship space for people of color, as we say we are. The RJC wants to encourage Friends to learn about race theory and to become more racially literate. We seek to provide as many opportunities and resources as we possibly can to aid Friends in this vital work.

We acknowledge and lift up that our Meeting has been gifted with a learned and outspoken authority on racism and White Supremacy, specifically one who was born into a Quaker family and has decades of experience with racism in the Society of Friends. We are grateful for the expert guidance of Sharon Smith as we endeavor to identify and address our own racism and guide the Meeting in addressing racism in our community.

We understand that some Friends interpret “peace” as the avoidance of conflict, but we feel compelled to remind all Friends that resolution cannot come without it, uncomfortable though it may be.

We ask Meeting to reaffirm its commitment to becoming an anti-racist community, and recommend that our pursuit of this worthy and timely goal will be greatly enhanced by taking advantage of Sharon's expertise and leadership. In essence, we have an opportunity to model for other meetings, how to do it.

As a step in this direction, the committee intends to display a poster in the foyer describing actions and attitudes that signify a faith community's progress from being overtly racist to becoming an actively anti-racist faith community. The poster is intended to provide guidance to the Meeting as a self-assessment tool.

Racial Justice Committee has the following recommendations for budget:

1. We recommend that Meeting demonstrate an equal commitment to Black-led organizations working on anti-racism as we have toward other non-Quaker organizations working on peace and social justice in other areas, i.e., an annual commitment of \$3000 to be disbursed according to the Racial Justice Committee's recommendations.
2. We recommend an investment of \$1750 for professional training by agencies outside of the Society of Friends, such as the Racial Equity Institute.
3. We ask that Meeting commit \$2000 for travel allowances to enable Sharon and other committee members to participate in the valuable ongoing anti-racism work in our Yearly Meeting and beyond.
4. We ask that Meeting provide \$250 funding for purchase of books and materials to improve our community's racial literacy and \$250 for other educational materials as the needs arise.

Our total request for funding in calendar year 2017 is therefore \$7250.

A Brief Report to AFM/RJC 12th Month

Six Friends of color were charged with forming a standing SAYMA committee to support Friends of color and provide educational resources to the yearly and monthly meetings regarding issues of race and racism. Loving fellowship was enjoyed by all, as we accomplished the task through working worship, on the weekend of November 18th 19th and 20th in Atlanta.

It was decided, that the name of the standing committee is, SAYMA/URJ (Uplifting Racial Justice). Folami Adams (Atlanta) and Sharon Smith (Asheville) will be its co-clerks. A draft mission statement and vision were written, and will be shared after final approval by the committee. Goals were agreed on by canvassing a wider group of SAYMA FOC regarding what they feel they need to feel safe and welcome as SAYMA Friends of color.

It was decided that the committee will meet quarterly and institute an annual pre-SAYMA Friends of Color retreat, in order to conduct committee business. A budget proposal is in the works.

Here is to SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice, Sharon Smith, SAYMA/URJ co-clerk

The Asheville Friends Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) supports the Standing Rock Tribe of the Oceti Sakowin (Sioux) in their stand to protect their sovereign land and sacred sites from the encroachment of the Dakota Access Pipeline. We support the Standing Rock Tribe's justifiable demand that the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline be stopped immediately and completely, and any related land easements be denied. We stand in solidarity with the Standing Rock Tribe seeking full restitution for damage and injury, and we uphold the rights of indigenous people and their allies to peacefully resist the Dakota Access Pipeline without threat of violence from federal, state, and local agencies or private contractors. We unite with their prayer to protect the sacred waters that are the heart of our nation.

Minute 4: Friends heartily approved the minute supporting the rights of the Standing Rock Tribe and all indigenous people especially regarding the protection of water and sacred sites.

M&C Report-George Gjelfriend and Patti Hughes

State of the Meeting report. Patti will schedule a meeting with clerks of committees in January, plus we will have charts and sticky notes that all can contribute to after Meetings for Worship. Suggestions of statements to ask folks to respond to: “what do you love about the Meeting”, “ how does the Meeting meet your spiritual needs, if at all”, ask the kids what their thoughts are, “what do you think we could do to implement more get togethers outside of meeting”.

MFB Minutes – George asked that we use friends' first names and last initial in the Business Meeting minutes, rather than “a friend”. The Minutes would be richer if we knew who had said something. Our Minutes are our history.

The recording clerk spoke of her hesitance to name those who speak during our discussions as we seek unity in our decision making. Because our time is limited today, we are asked to take time to consider this over the next month and revisit the topic of how to record our business meeting regarding naming those who speak in the meeting.

Jerry Williams Patti wrote up the letter expressing our opinions of the killing of s. Mt Express would use it if we didn't submit to anyone else, but it was also submitted to other papers in the area. She sent it to SAYMA and Swannanoa Meeting.

Pendle Hill Workshop on Clerking with Joy and Confidence. Patti said it was fabulous, recommends for everyone even if not a Clerk. Arthur Larrabee was the facilitator and was wonderful. Karen Proulx was there from Swannanoa. Patti Hughes thanks the meeting for the opportunity.

We closed with a moment of silence to meet again as way opens on First Month 8, 2016.