

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Asheville Friends Meeting

Fifth Month 5, 2019

(DRAFT)

Present: Robin Wells, Clerk; Pat Campbell, Recording Clerk. Patti Hughes, Barbara Esther, Bob Lackey, Kitty Reynolds, Scotty Utz, Mike Eddy, Edie Patrick, Jim Cavener, Pat Johnson, Sarah Jane Thomas, Steve Livingston, Annika Peacock, Michael Peacock, Bobby Carter, Katherine Kowal, Adrienne Renee Weir, Beth Eddy, Margaret Normile

Meeting began with a period of silent worship from which clerk, Robin Wells, read the following letter that was written to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting by a group of former clerks of that yearly meeting. It was taken from the PYM website:

April 2019

A Letter to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends from the Former Clerks

Dear Friends,

As the six living former Clerks of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, we offer this letter of loving encouragement to our Yearly Meeting. Over the course of our Yearly Meeting's three hundred-and-thirty-eight-year history, we have experienced times when Friends were troubled and exercised about public actions and weighty concerns in Annual Sessions. Nevertheless, we endured and continued with our faith, vision, and love for one another. We have a robust and proven spiritual tradition and we are called to understand and practice it today, even in the face of discord.

It is our experience that our community has been in a state of contentiousness and unfriendliness that has separated us in what seem to be secular ways. Several factors have contributed to this condition: tensions regarding a vision for undoing racism; adjustment to new structures; abuse of social media; the unfamiliarity that many Friends seem to have with Quaker decision-making practices in large groups; and hurtful behavior that has gone unaddressed. Some Friends stay

away either out of frustration or because our public conflict is uncomfortable.

It can be hot and messy when we do not manage conflict well. When we are challenged, it is essential that we stay in relationship with one another while seeking the way forward and resolving individual differences. Love still abides in and with us. We can, in all humility, love one another even when there are painful differences.

We unite in encouraging each of us to stay in relationship, to hear one another, and to move forward with love and respect. Our Yearly Meeting is a spiritual community; with God's help, we can transform these struggles into something new—strong, penetrating and effective to address all matters before us, including our concerns with racism.

Our decision-making is a spiritual process that calls us to hold our meetings for business in a spirit of worship, seeking and being open to the leadings of the Spirit. We know that together in waiting worship and with Divine assistance many things are possible; we will be astonished at what unfolds. It takes all of us: we who pray, we who listen, we who heal, we who witness for peace and justice, and we who have voice and vision are needed now. Now is a time for us to join together, humbly finding our way, sharing kindness, and uniting as a community in Spirit-led witness. On the following page, we suggest some of the shared practices that can be useful to us as we travel with one another for Truth.

In tenderness and love,

Arthur M. Larrabee (1991 – 1995)	Gretchen Castle (2002 – 2005)
Martha B. Bryans (1995 – 1999)	Thomas Swain (2005 – 2012)
Arlene Kelly (1999 – 2002)	Jada Jackson (2012 – 2015)

Reminders of Good Business Meeting Practices (continued from the letter above)

When we as a spiritual, deliberative body understand and adhere to our shared practices and discipline, Friends decision-making processes work well.

1. Be present in a spirit of worship, holding the meeting, each speaker and the clerks in the Light.
2. Seek the good of the meeting as a whole and God's truth for it; be prepared to change your mind and to let go of personal preferences and ego.
3. Listen carefully to the person speaking, particularly holding in the Light those people and ideas with which you disagree. Consider an attitude of curiosity rather than an attitude of judgment.
4. Challenge yourself to trust the Light that is given to others; be open to new truth, revelation and insight; be teachable.
5. Seek and wait for the clerk's recognition before speaking; address the clerk or the meeting as a whole, not individual Friends. Not everyone who wishes to speak will be recognized.
6. Speak in the hope of serving the meeting's search for Truth. Your personal opinion, or your feelings on an issue, are relevant only to the extent that they help in that search.
7. Share the truth that is given to you. After you have spoken, release what you've said to the meeting. Releasing is as important as what you have to say.
8. Let your speaking be simple and concise. Debate and appeal to emotion are out of place in a meeting for business.
9. When tensions arise, consider how they might be used creatively in the search for Truth. While we belong to a community committed to loving fellowship and unity, we know experientially that the "third way" we seek often emerges from engaging tensions.
10. Participate with clerking consciousness, thinking about the meeting and the process through the eyes of the clerk.
11. Respect the authority of the clerk and the elders. We have given them special responsibility to guide us in supporting the

meeting and our decision-making. When the clerk is standing or speaking, deference to the clerk is expected.

12. Acknowledge, with gratitude, the opportunities we have to do the work of the Spirit in community.

The agenda was reviewed, and Meeting accepted the agenda.

Minute #1: Friends approved the 4th month minutes.

Announcements

We are excited to announce that Annika's welcome party will be held today from 4-6 pm at Nick Mimkin's house. Nick lives two doors down from the Meetinghouse. There is no parking at Nick's house, so please park in the lower part of the Meetinghouse parking lot and walk over. There will be a group meeting at the Meetinghouse at that time, so we want to leave the parking near the house available for them.

The Youth Celebration will be taking place at the Meetinghouse at the rise of meeting on June 2nd. This event is a wonderful time to get to know the children of meeting and spend some relaxing time together.

We have the laminated copies of "How We Worship" ready to share with visitors. They will be kept in a basket on top of the cubby holes on the wall beside the front door. When you are greeting, and a visitor arrives you may offer this to them. Please ask them to leave it on a chair in the meeting room after Meeting for Worship. We can collect them when we collect the hymnals and return them to the basket. There will also be some plain paper copies at the back of the basket, in case someone would like to take a copy with them.

Ministry and Counsel has made some changes to the closing meeting document. When it is your turn to close meeting, please take a few minutes to read over the two pages of instructions ahead of time. One Friend experienced some discomfort with the order of the instructions.

The Meeting wishes to express its deep thanks for the wonderful drawing of the Meeting House our neighbor, Linda Welsh, gave to the Meeting. When she

arrived, we thanked her and presented her a fuscia plant. She recalled the circumstances which brought her to the Meeting at the time her daughter was an infant.

Ad Hoc Planning Committee for SAYMA Chat-and-Chew

We need a small committee to coordinate our Chat-and-Chew obligation on Thursday, June 13th Warren Wilson College. This committee will be setting up food and beverages for that evening and will be requesting donations from the meeting. A sign-up sheet will be passed around for people to indicate their food contributions. Pat Johnson and Robin Wells will help set up and take down the area. Patti Hughes will bring with her any food that is dropped off at the Meeting House by a time to be announced later.

Committee Reports:

Nominating Committee: - Kitty Reynolds

Nominating Committee would like to put forth Michael Peacock's name as our meeting's SAYMA representative. It was noted that the SAYMA Representative's responsibilities are listed in the SAYMA Faith and Practice.

Minute #2 - The Meeting for Business approved Michael Peacock as the Meeting's representative to SAYMA.

Peace and Earth Committee – Pat Johnson

Peace & Earth proposes to add a small sign similar to the "Black Lives Matter" sign at our front steps to acknowledge that we are on Cherokee land. See a copy of the proposed sign below. Cherokee Professor Adcock of UNC-A has agreed the sign would be fine for now. He and others in the Eastern Cherokee Band are working with the Tribal Council to get approved wording for a land acknowledgement sign but that will take some time.



When asked about other Indian tribes having an equal claim to these lands, Pat said she has researched this issue and has found nothing suggesting this (although it was pointed out that other indigenous groups may have had prior claim before the Cherokees). Friends discussed wording, specifically the use of "we" versus "you,"

but did not come to unity. It was decided to use “we” in this temporary sign since it was more inclusive and the Peace and Earth Committee wanted to have the sign up by May 11. Pat Johnson will ask for feedback from the attenders at the Cherokee graduation next Saturday as the ceremony will be held at the Meeting House.

Minute #3 – The Business Meeting approved of the concept, use of the word “we” and general design of the sign. The sign will be temporary, pending the decisions of the Cherokee Tribal Council regarding land acknowledgement.

Junior Meeting for Business report regarding the garden – Adelaide Utz and Anders Utz

The Junior Meeting was asked to consider participation in a garden bed and its placement. They really liked the idea of the garden. They wondered how much they would be participating in the planting. They also did not want the garden under the dogwood tree because children liked to play under and on it. Steve Livingston said he would create the garden space and support the garden. He said that young friends can participate as much as they want as long as they work with everyone involved so people are not working at cross-purposes. Regarding their concern about pollution from the car motors (the parking area is close to the proposed garden area), the Meeting was pleased to hear their concerns about car exhaust. The amount of pollution from our cars should not be a problem given the amount of ambient pollution, and also the quality of sunlight on the garden has to be taken into account.

Steve Livingston addendum to above topic: Steve presented more information about the garden. Because of some disagreement about placement, he is not sure where the space will be, but he wants to start purchasing and delivering needed materials. He will be purchasing 8 cubic yards of top soil (that will temporarily take over a couple of parking spaces but allowing him easier access to the soil); he will also purchase cedar siding for the beds. He thinks it should come up to no more than \$1000 and is asking the Meeting for up to \$1000 to cover the expenses. If he should need more, he will cover them himself.

Minute #4 – The Meeting agreed to cover up to \$1000 to establish the garden beds on our property.

We closed with a period of silent worship to meet again as way opens in sixth month, 2019.

Submitted:

Pat Campbell – Recording Clerk