

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Asheville Friends Meeting

9th Month 11, 2022

DRAFT

Present via zoom: Bob Lackey, Clerk; Kitti Reynolds, Recording Clerk, Gita Larson, Ellie Cox, Margaret Normile, Rylin Hansen, Margaret Farmer, Morgan Murray, Chris de Beer (Swannanoa Valley Meeting) and Jennifer Dickie (Atlanta Meeting)

Present at the Meeting House: Pat Johnson, Jim Cavener, Robin Wells, Steve Livingston, Barbara Esther, Rusty Maynard, Laura Maynard Lane, Elizabeth Davis

Meeting opened with Silent Worship

The Clerk shared a reading out of silence.

“3. Transition to Light. As we continue to address an issue, as we lay aside any need to win, as we turn increasingly inward in order to transcend differences, long focus brings us to the Source of resolution and clarity. It is in this Light that God’s voice is heard. From the Light we sense an influx of enveloping harmony. Peace tinged with triumph settles upon individuals and over the meeting. When we feel the Presence settle among us, and silence overtakes us, we have arrived where we want to be. Silence is an inward and outward sign that the life process has been completed. A sensitive clerk will allow the silence to linger. Transition to Light makes possible a gathered meeting. This is why Friends consider business meeting to be an extension of

meeting for worship. The process of reaching unity in Light brings us close to the peace that passeth understanding.”

Barry Morley, Beyond Consensus Salvaging Sense of the Meeting, p 19. Pendle Hill Pamphlet 307.

Minute #1: The eighth month business meeting minutes were approved as written.

Announcements:

Worship Sharing - 9/18 Spiritual Enrichment

The Peace Testimony in a Time of War

The Peace and Earth Committee will facilitate a worship sharing session to hear how others in our community are - or are not - struggling with the cognitive dissonance between support for the armed resistance to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the word "utterly" in the Peace Testimony.

There were two articles in the current issue of Friends Journal offering very different perspectives on this. In addition, there are two articles from past issues that are pertinent. Here are links to all four:

<https://www.friendsjournal.org/do-friends-still-need-the-peace-testimony/>

<https://www.friendsjournal.org/rejecting-the-false-reality/>

<https://www.friendsjournal.org/the-peace-testimony-and-ukraine/>

<https://www.friendsjournal.org/categorically-not-the-testimonies/>

SAYMA Nominating Committee

SAYMA is searching for someone with the following skills who may feel led to join the existing Handbook committee. Please let your clerks and your Meeting nominating Committee know of this opportunity to serve. Thanks for your help in sharing this information.

The Handbook Committee needs people who enjoy working with words, pay attention to detail, have good communication skills, regularly attend or are willing to begin attending Representative and Yearly Meetings, and are able to help with discernment about what our Handbook can grow into as a living document. A Young Adult Friend would be a delightful bonus.

Please contact Annie Black at rablolly5@gmail.com if you have questions or know of Friends who are interested in this service.

Committees:

Spiritual Enrichment: Barbara Esther

Report of the Spiritual Enrichment Committee
Ninth Month 11, 2022

Several Friends met on Ninth Month 5, 2022, to discuss what we might want to include in our curriculum for the coming year

regarding adult spiritual enrichment Besides the intergenerational events we have usually included (Christmas play, Simple Gifts, Secret Pals and Youth Celebration) and Fifth First Day card writing to our legislators, some ideas include:

- ❖ What is basic in Quakerism? Quakerism 101 topics
- ❖ Sharing of spiritual journeys
- ❖ A “tour” of the library to encourage use of the materials there
- ❖ A retreat for spiritual renewal, either for a day or longer
- ❖ Learning about recognizing our spiritual gifts
- ❖ Grief and loss regarding the isolation each of us has experienced to some degree both due to the pandemic and because of the ecological concerns resulting from climate change, etc.
- ❖ What you should know about Quaker practice and philosophy
- ❖ Essential practices and traditional ones that might be problematic to Friends of Color
- ❖ Light shining on the dark: cyclical problems around the world

There are a few sessions already scheduled. We will have to prioritize the topics suggested above for spiritual enrichment Sundays (1st and 3rd) throughout the year. On the calendar right now is

- ❖ Worship Sharing around the Peace Testimony in a time of war in Ukraine on **September 18;**
- ❖ Tentatively, we may have a discussion of Nominating Committee vacancies on **October 2;**
- ❖ Death and Dying part 2, re documents each of us needs to consider on **October 16** with guest Ellen Kaczmarak.
- ❖ a discussion of the Pendle Hill pamphlet *Beyond Consensus, Salvaging Sense of the Meeting* by Barry Morley on **November 6;**
- ❖ and a guest from UNC-A, the new Director of the Indigenous Studies Department, Juan Sanchez Martinez, on **November 20.**

Thank you to all who have brought ideas to the committee and who took time to assist us in trying to find a balance in enrichment of spiritual growth among the adults in the meeting. If there are further suggestions, please let the committee members know.

Barbara Esther, Rylin Hansen and Margaret Farmer

Barbara Esther showed us a beautiful crocheted blanket from SaraWilla.

Ministry and Counsel: Robin

Friends, the cooler months are approaching and we need to prepare for when it is too cold to hold Meeting for Worship on the porch. COVID metrics have dropped significantly and Buncombe County is considered to be in a "low community level" for COVID. This includes a wastewater monitoring percentile of between 20-39.9 percent. This is the second to the lowest level. Of course, these COVID metrics could go up again and we will want to keep an eye on them.

As things stand now, are we comfortable moving our meeting for worship and first day school indoors when the temperatures dip down? Keep in mind that we have already set up room purifiers in the Meetingroom and in two of the rooms upstairs in the Meetinghouse. We would still make masks mandatory while indoors, unless Friends feel that is unnecessary. We could ask Friends to eat and drink refreshments on the porch. Is business meeting ready to make this decision?

In response to the cold weather, a Friend asked should we consider sitting on the lawn.

A Friend asked are we ready to have a hybrid with Zoom and moving indoors or go back entirely to Zoom. These are the options. Cold weather

is not the only parameter - we have to consider the metrics. What if the weather is cold and the Covid metrics are very high? q

Another Friend asked about the impact of our decision on First Day school. Our kids did meet for check in on Zoom earlier in there pandemic, but it didn't work for most families. Now we are starting to rebuild the kids' community. Going back to Zoom may cause a negative impact for the kids. The kids are in school now and most are not wearing masks. So for them being in the Meetinghouse with air purifiers and mandatory face coverings is less risky. One Friend stated that most families would feel comfortable for their children to meet in person in the MH.

A Friend asked if we could we use other metrics besides the wastewater percentage, for example hospital rates of Covid patients.

A Friend from M and C said the low covid rating reported now is not based on wastewater alone, but includes the hospitalization rate. She reminded us that there are other groups in Asheville meeting inside now. Are we being overly cautious? She pointed out that we can meet indoors, open the windows, wear N 95 masks; and people who feel vulnerable can meet by Zoom. If the Covid rate is high, we can meet exclusively via Zoom.

One Friend referred to her epidemiologist friend who stated that percentiles of covid can be misleading, if reference points aren't clear.

Another Friend stated that the M and C Friend spoke her mind.

A Friend said if we base what we do on decisions in business meeting Covid metrics could change during the subsequent month. He suggested that as long as the weather is warm, masking should be optional both on the porch and indoors. We need to clearly state our Covid policy both on signs at the front doors and on our website, so that people who are more vulnerable can take precautions and let us know of their needs.

It was agreed that M and C would bring recommendations on signage, website information, and recognition of visitors/members with special needs to the next Meeting for Business.

M and C made it clear that the Meeting does not have a policy on requiring Covid vaccinations.

A Friend suggested that M and C have a way to deal with changes in Covid metrics between Meetings for Business.

A Friend from M and C recommended that we initially make masking mandatory when we first move indoors.

Another Friend said the signs should include the following information: Vaccinations are not required, masking is required, people with special needs should make those needs known. We have air filtration systems in the Meeting House.

Robin asked for permission to hold first day school indoors should we need to.

Another Friend discussed the importance of properly fitting masks.

Also, a Friend asked would M and C explain how we would weigh relative risks when metrics are higher.

Minute #2: Discussion will continue at the next MFB on meeting indoors. We approved that First Day School could meet indoors when necessary with masks required.

Ministry and Counsel: Bob

SAYF Steering Committee members Chris de Beer and Jennifer Dickie presented the following.

SAYF Covid-19 Guidelines for in person retreats (version 3)

Approved March 20, 2022

The following guidelines were developed understanding the evolving circumstances and science surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic. SAYF Covid-19 guidelines will be adjusted to meet changing safety standards as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control. SAYF respects local Friend's rules and expectations within Friend's Meetinghouses. These guidelines therefore will also be responsive to local Friend's Meeting's expectations for use of Meetinghouse space during SAYF retreats.

SAYF Steering Committee recognizes that vaccination is the primary defense against severe illness and death from Covid-19 and encourages all members of the SAYF community who are able, to be vaccinated and receive a booster when available and recommended. While new variants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus may be more contagious and may cause breakthrough infection in vaccinated individuals, vaccination is still the primary defense against serious illness and death from Covid-19. Therefore:

1. All participants of SAYF retreats, young Friends and adults are required to have been fully vaccinated* and have received a booster, when available and recommended, prior to attendance. This includes but is not limited to, Friendly Adult Nurturers [FANs], drivers [FADs], and night shepherds. Full vaccination is considered:
 - a. 2 weeks after a second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
 - b. 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine
2. All attendees of SAYF retreats must take a rapid [self-test](#) the day of departure** for a SAYF retreat.

- a. If your self-test has a positive result, stay home or isolate for 10 days, wear a mask if you have contact with others, and call your healthcare provider.
3. All attendees of SAYF retreats will follow the most up to date [CDC guidance](#). Masks at SAYF retreats will be optional for indoor activities when all counties from which young Friends will be traveling are measuring low or medium based on the [CDC Covid-19 Community Levels](#). If any county is high/red we will maintain indoor masking during waking hours, for the retreat.
4. All attendees of SAYF retreats will follow local Friend's Meeting Covid-19 protocols for groups visiting the Meetinghouse while in and around the Meetinghouse.
 - a. The SAYF program coordinator will procure the guidelines prior to the retreat.
 - b. These guidelines will be shared with the Lead FAN and YF planning committee and other FANs attending, prior to the retreat.
 - c. If any of the local rules are unduly burdensome or in conflict with CDC guidance, the lead FAN, in consultation with the clerk of SAYF Steering Committee, may

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- request from the local meeting, that the rule be adjusted or waived for the SAYF retreat. If such an adjustment is not allowed, then the lead FAN and SAYF SC clerk will determine if a different venue is required.
- d. The lead FAN is responsible for sharing the applicable local meeting Covid-19 guidelines with nurturers and adult volunteers at the retreat.
- e. All Nurturers, FANs and other adult volunteers must be familiar with the local meeting Covid-19 guidelines as well as these SAYF guidelines and assist in compliance.
- f. The local meeting Covid-19 guidelines and these SAYF guidelines will be posted during the retreat for all to reference as needed.

5. Attendees of a SAYF retreat will not be required to wear masks while sleeping.
 - a. physical distance during sleep may be required depending on CDC guidance or local Friend's Meeting requirements.
 - b. In the absence of more stringent guidance, during times of substantial or high transmission as tracked by the CDC (<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>) sleeping bags should be oriented head-to-toe, with space between rows of sleeping bags
6. Anyone planning to attend a retreat who has been in close contact with someone who tests positive for Covid-19 must not attend unless a negative Covid-19 test taken 3-5 days following exposure can be provided to the lead FAN.
7. In the event that a participant displays symptoms of Covid-19, the following protocols will be enacted:
 - a. The person will be immediately separated from the group.
 - b. An adult volunteer will check on the person while wearing a mask. Adult volunteers will maintain 6' physical distance as care and safety allow.
 - c. All rooms and equipment used by an infected person will be cleaned and disinfected according to CDC guidelines.
 - d. The family of the infected individual will be contacted immediately.
 - i. If the affected individual is a local resident they will return home immediately.
 - ii. If the affected individual is a young Friend who has traveled from a distance their return home will be negotiated in consultation with their parents.
 - iii. If the affected individual is a FAN or FAD they will arrange transportation home separate from young Friends.
 - iv. In the case that a FAN or FAD must leave the retreat early,

transportation home for young Friends who traveled with them will be negotiated with their parents and other FANs.

8. In the event that a participant tests positive for Covid-19 (with or without symptoms) in the week following a retreat, the following protocols will be enacted:
 - a. The infected participant will notify the lead FAN of the retreat immediately.
 - b. The lead FAN with the support of the SAYF program coordinator will alert all participants and parents/guardians that a participant tested positive for Covid-19.
 - c. The lead FAN will alert the clerk of the host meeting that a participant at the SAYF retreat tested positive for Covid-19.
 - d. To ensure privacy, no representative of SAYF will share the identity of the participant who tested positive.

*Young Friends or Adults with medical conditions that prevent vaccination may request this requirement be waived. Requests must be made to the SAYF Steering Committee Clerk in advance of the retreat and waiver will be determined in consultation with Lead FAN of that retreat.

**Friends should plan in advance to have an over the counter rapid tests to available the day of departure. If financial support for purchasing a rapid-test is needed, please contact the SAYF program coordinator, Autumn Woodward.

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Chris told us that the SAFERs have really missed their time together, even though they managed with Zoom. Jennifer said that through 8 in-person retreats this past year, no one has tested positive for COVID. Our meeting is no longer without teens, and we are centrally located for SAFE . They would love to

meet in our building. They would want to join us for about 15 minutes during MFW.

A Friend proposed we accept this with great joy.

Minute # 3 Approved having SAYF retreats in our MH.

Finance: Pat Johnson presented a partial financial report. Operating funds and general funds are in one account. Quick Books only goes until June 30. Satchel and Ellen haven't been able to populate it since then. It is easier for Pat to present the financial report only for the last month.

The report didn't include any transfer to other funds that didn't happen in August, nor insurance payment which will come later. The water bill came from our building fund account not our general fund. Pat will change this. In August a check from CIMA cleared through Self Help, our credit union, that was dated Dec 2021. She wondered how it could have cleared so late.

Donations to the Meeting are in line with previous years.

Fund Balance sheet and our Aug 2022 income & expenses sheet. Attached copies in PDF

Peace and Earth:

Thirteenth Annual International Day of Peace Observance on
Wednesday, September 21, 2022.

WNC People's Declaration of Peace 2022
End Racism. Build Peace

Whereas, each year **International Day of Peace** is observed around the world on **September 21st**, the United Nations General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace through observing at least **24 hours of non-violence and cease-fire**; and

Whereas, the theme of the **2022 International Day of Peace** is “**End Racism. Build Peace.**,” the **People of Peace in Western North Carolina** urge leaders to **initiate reparations** to those in our communities who have been left out of generational wealth gains because of racial discrimination; and

Whereas, achieving true peace entails more than laying down arms, People of Peace demand **respect for all communities where members have the opportunity to flourish and where all are treated equally**; and

Whereas, local, regional and national governments are called upon to **transition to an economy based on justice and sustainability**, People of Peace demand that preferences go to **home-grown businesses that pay livable wages from jobs that actually create peace**; and

Whereas, **governments are responsible for making wise decisions**, People of Peace demand that they **hear calls here at home and around the world for peace, especially for the dismantling of nuclear weapons**; and

Whereas, **communities thrive when they feel safe**, People of Peace demand that public safety departments **not be militarized, use of force is minimized and de-escalation is maximized**; and

Whereas, communities desire to **protect Planet Earth's land, air, water and climate**, the People of Peace demand increased utilization of **clean renewable energy in our homes, businesses, government buildings, schools, churches and transportation modes**; and

Whereas, residents want their **children, families and communities protected from violence**, the People of Peace demand **enactment of responsible gun violence prevention laws** and regulations; and
Whereas, communities prefer to spend **more on education, healthcare, housing and environment**, the People of Peace demand **less be spent on militarization** at the federal and local levels; and
Whereas, a **prosperous community is the goal** of all residents of Western North Carolina, , we the People of Peace demand that **all – natives and immigrants – be equipped to reap the harvest** of a just and peaceful community, county, state, country and world every day of the year. Therefore, we the People of Peace in Western North Carolina, hereby **designate Wednesday, September 21, 2022 as our Thirteenth Annual International Day of Peace in Western North Carolina**, and urge residents to take actions everyday that end racism and build peace at home and around the world.
(Names of groups endorsing) WNC Physicians for Social Responsibility, Veterans for Peace Chapter 099, WNC4Peace, etc.

Minute #4: We approved signing on to the WNC People’s Declaration of Peace 2022. The Clerk will ask Rachael Bliss to include the Meeting as a signatory.

Nominating: Kitti

Nominating Committee is happy to nominate Margaret Farmer for Spiritual Enrichment.

Minute #5: approved

Racial Justice Committee: Steve presented this report.

Report of Racial Justice Committee 9th month 2022

Committee met on 9/5/22. Present were Ellie Cox, Margaret Farmer, Gita Larson, and Steve Livingston (interim clerk)

We want to remind the Meeting that there is still opportunity for Friends to get involved with the Yearly Meeting anti-racism affinity groups that are being formed. Registration has been extended at least to the end of this month. So far about 70 SAYMA Friends have registered including about 10 from Asheville Meeting. Each of these groups will consist of no more than ten people, and will include Friends from different Meetings and Worship Groups, so it's a great opportunity to connect with Quakers with whom we are not in regular contact. Once a month the groups will meet via zoom for 90 minutes to share their experiences with that month's assignment. That's the extent of the commitment and there's no cost to participate. The program will run for at least a year, and is designed for us as white Quakers, to be about us as white Quakers, to help us as white Quakers in our journey to becoming an anti-racist faith community.

We want to report to the Meeting that several Friends participated in the East End Valley Street Heritage Festival on 8/27 and in the Goombay! Festival on 9/2-9/4 as volunteer workers in Ms. Bettie Council's Zig Zag Zoom Enterprises, providing logistical and comfort support for vendors and festival guests. This created an opportunity for us to be directed and guided by a Black leader, to provide help and support for Black citizens and entrepreneurs with no expectation of compensation, and to interact socially with Black people in predominantly Black spaces where we

were welcome as white people. Our presence and our work were well-received and appreciated, by festival goers, by vendors, and by Ms. Bettie Council. The Committee is grateful to all Asheville Friends who showed up, did the work, and helped create a favorable impression of our faith community.

The Racial Justice Committee is beginning the work of creating a Minute on Reparative Justice. We are mindful that there are many different layers of anti-racism work that we individually and collectively engage in, on individual, community, and governmental levels. We are mindful that while our anti-racism work is applicable to Black, Indigenous, and all other People of Color, Reparative Justice is specific to people of African descent, whose ancestors were kidnapped and enslaved, who suffered from the injustice and oppression of Jim Crow, and who continue to suffer from the systemic racism that permeates our Euro-centric culture. As we begin this work, we are united in our sense of deep regret and sorrow for these five centuries of harm inflicted upon people of African descent. We are united in our sense of accountability for addressing this harm on a personal, community, and governmental level.

We ask that as we proceed in our worshipful discernment in the conduct of our Meeting's business, that we are ever mindful of how our corporate decisions support us in our goal to transform into an actively anti-racist faith community. We ask that we be mindful of how our decisions support us in the goal of engaging in reparative justice. We ask that we hold ourselves accountable to our commitment to becoming a welcoming, multi-cultural faith community, with each of us knowing how to be welcoming to all who come to be with us.

SAYMA: Margaret Farmer's report was presented by the Clerk.

Letter to SAYMA from Yearly Meeting Planning and Finance Committees

Dear SAYMA Friends,

Please share within your monthly meetings, worship groups and communities.

Whether in person or online, many of us came together after a 2-year hiatus, following a time of great uncertainty, and enjoyed a wonderful Yearly Meeting. The Finance Committee commends the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee (YMPC) for providing a hybrid experience that gathered us together in Spirit through fellowship, worship and worship sharing, Junior YM, SAYF, YAF's, business, and workshops.

Our participation level was high, given the years without in-person sessions because of the pandemic, although not as high as hoped and less than YM experienced in 2019. Consequently, our income was lower than projected by about \$12,000 to cover the expenses for the Yearly Meeting.

We write to request that Meetings and individual Friends consider the ways in which a special donation to the General Fund of SAYMA will help minimize the unexpected revenue shortfall.*

Background:

The Finance committee brought a Fiscal Year 2023 proposed budget before the SAYMA business sessions in June with a planned deficit of about \$22,000, which was approved to begin in October 2022. The Finance committee had agreed that the planned 2023 budget would be a reasonable way to use some of the Undesignated funds held by SAYMA. Now we will also realize a deficit for 2022, dipping into the undesignated funds even further to cover the shortfall in revenue.

With heartfelt thanks,

Karen Morris, clerk Finance committee and Jennifer Dickie, clerk Yearly Meeting Planning Committee

* Donations by check should have a note on the memo line “General fund” and be sent to:

Communications: Bob

This was intended to begin a discussion regarding installing WiFi and purchasing a laptop.

Pat pointed out that Ethical Society were considering paying for WiFi in the MH set up because they need it for their programs sometimes. A Friend thought using a hotspot was working fine. The Ethical Society was going to examine this idea of using a hotspot. Robin: we first thought having hybrid Meeting would be for a short time. Having hard wiring of MH should make it reliable to be hybrid. It would be nice to not have to rely on people to bring their own computer.

A Friend asked what would it cost?

A Friend pointed out this was not for general discussion yet - leave it to Communications and M and C for next year's budget. Another Friend likes the idea of hard wiring and our own computer.

A Friend suggested we notify the Ethical Society that we are working on this.

Robin from M and C said this is just an introduction, not expecting a decision. But we only have one person on communications!!! The matter will be handled properly. Not today!

This was the last Business Meeting clerked by Bob Lackey. M and C presented this:

Minute of Thanks to Robert Lackey

Ninth Month 11, 2022

Asheville Friends thank Robert Lackey for his service as our Clerk for the past two years. Although they were years during which everything from meeting on the front lawn of the meetinghouse to hybrid Zoom and masking on the front porch were our only ways of gathering during the COVID epidemic, Bob calmly clerked with both efficiency and love. We are grateful for all he did as clerk and for his faithful presence.

Attachments:

