

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Asheville Friends Meeting

10th Month 09, 2022

Present in the Meetinghouse: Pat Johnson, Clerk, Barbara Burke, Recording Clerk, Jim Cavener, Jim Barham, Robin Wells, Katherine Kowal, Susanne Junkin-Friederichs, Joel O'Brien, Kim Wagner, Jennifer Ward, Laura Lane, Elizabeth Davis.

Present via Zoom: Mike Eddy, Margaret Farmer, Steve Livingston, Ellen Carr, Rylin Hansen, Satchel Loftis, Barbara Esther, Wanda Guokas, Margaret Normile, Susan Oehler.

Meeting opened with Silent Worship.

The Clerk shared a reading out of silence.

“When the Strain is Heaviest” from *Meditations of the Heart*, by Howard Thurman. Beacon Publishing 1981. p 84.

At times when the strain is heaviest upon us,
And our tired nerves cry out in many-tongued pain
Because the flow of love is chocked far below the deep recesses
Of the heart,
We seek with cravings firm and hard
The strength to break the dam
That we may live again in love's warm stream,
We want more love; and more and more
Until, at last, we are restored and made anew!

Or so it seems.

When we are closer drawn to God's great Light
And in its radiance stand revealed
The meaning of our need informs our minds,
"More love," we cried; as if love could be weighed, measured
 bundled, tied,
As if with perfect wisdom we could say -- to one, a little love;
 to another, an added portion;
And on and on until all debts were paid
With no one left behind.

But now we see the tragic blunder of our cry,
Not for more love our hungry cravings seek!
But more power to love.
To put behind the tender feeling, the understanding heart,
The boundless reaches of the Father's Care
Makes love eternal, always kindled, always new,
This becomes the eager meaning of the aching heart
The bitter cry-- the anguish call!

Minute 1: The Ninth Month business meeting minutes approved.

Announcements: Pat Johnson

1. End-of-Life Paperwork Forum will take place during the second hour on 10/16/22, presented by Dr. Ellen Kaczmarek. Margaret Normile has made copies of End-of Life forms, and they are in the foyer of the Meetinhouse. If anyone needs a copy and there are none left please email Margaret Normile: margaretnormile@gmail.com

2. The Second-Hour Forum on 11/06/22 will be a discussion led by Ministry and Council using the Pendle Hill pamphlet *Beyond Consensus: Salvaging the Sense of the Meeting* by Barry Morley. We are encouraged to attend if

able, as the “Sense of the Meeting” will help our Meeting grow Spiritually. Pat has copies of the pamphlet if someone needs one.

Committees:

Nominating: Mike Eddy

The nominating Committee has three nominations to put forward:

- Kim Wagner is nominated as Meetinghouse Rental Coordinator (MRC). As MRC, Kim will be responsible for rental of the Meetinghouse to outside groups, and obtaining the needed documentation. The MRC is also responsible for programming the Meetinghouse thermostat.

Minute #2: The nomination of Kim Wagner as Meetinghouse Coordinator is approved with gratitude.

- Ellie Cox is nominated to serve on Racial Justice Committee.

Minute #3: The nomination of Ellie Cox to the Racial Justice Committee is approved with gratitude.

- Beth Eddy is nominated to serve on the Finance Committee

Minute #4: The nomination of Beth Eddy to serve on the Finance Committee is approved with gratitude.

Finance: Ellen Carr & Satchel Loftis

Ellen shared a screen of the Finance report: The spreadsheet showed the finance report through September 30, 2022. We are running about 60% of our revenue YTD. In years past, more funds have come in at the end of the year but people are encouraged to support our Meeting now.

Meeting support is running at about 67% YTD, whereas last year this time we were at 78%. Requests for Outreach checks should be submitted before the end of the year.

A question was raised as to whether Finance Committee has plans to send an email reminder to Members this year, and Finance confirmed that this will be done.

A fund balances report was also shown on a shared screen. The reports given here will be appended at the end of meeting for business minutes, and all financial reports are available on the Asheville Monthly Meeting website under "Documents."

A Friend was asked about the Just Giving donation button on our website. Will there be a dropdown menu that would enable people to give directly to certain line items listed? The Friend indicated that there were still discussions going on in committees, and when the committees have discerned the way forward it will be brought to MFB. A different Friend indicated that some members have been experimenting with the Just Giving setup on the AFM website so that individuals who want to make donations to some of the restricted funds will be able to click on a link on our website that will take them directly to the Just Giving page for a particular fund. This has not been set up yet, but they hope to have it available soon. Currently if anyone wants to make a donation to a restricted fund they can write a check and indicate on the memo line the name of the fund or donate directly through Just Giving and add a comment indicating the specific fund they wish it to be applied to.

Additionally, Satchel reported on the general fund and indicated the Meeting will be notified if there are any changes. The screen showed how

the funds have been allocated. Satchel reported that how the money is spent is up to Meeting and there are no restrictions on where the money is allocated.

A Friend asked about Outreach funding appearing twice (on 2 different shared screens), under both Fund Balances and Operating Budget. Satchel reported that not all Outreach gifts in one of the categories had been spent in last year's budget, and that money was set aside for checks to be written in the following year (2022). This was a way to set the money aside in the following year's budget (the 2022 year budget). The Clerk said this was due to a large donation made at the end of 2021. Since the Outreach budget had been cut, the donation was applied to that fund. This happens occasionally and the money may span more than one year's budget. Another Friend responded that he thought the money in question had been sent to the Center for Native Health, and this was confirmed. Ellen is going to check on this and make sure it came out of the Outreach Fund.

The Meeting clerk stated the Treasurer's report she gave in last month's MFB indicated money in the Building fund and money market fund were incorrect, and this was brought to her attention. The finance committee indicated they were aware of this and would correct it.

Committees are reminded to have their requests for the 2023 budget submitted before Thanksgiving. Satchel will send out a notice to Committee clerks.

Minute #5: The Meeting accepted the Finance Committee report.

Ministry and Counsel: Robin Wells

Robin thanked Steve for his help on this report, and the Meeting thanked M&C and Robin for all their work.

Ministry & Counsel Proposal for Meeting for Worship

Our Meeting has tried to be responsive to the needs of our members and attenders throughout the COVID pandemic. With the recent drop in COVID metrics in our area, we find ourselves able to consider new opportunities for our Meeting. We would like to ask the Meeting to discern a way forward with two decisions.

First, we need to decide what COVID metric we want to use to determine when it is safe to move in-person Meeting for Worship into the Meetinghouse. Throughout the pandemic, we have relied on the various COVID metrics provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We propose continuing to rely on the CDC. In early 2022, the CDC updated the way COVID-19 is impacting our communities. It began determining the COVID-19 Community Level for communities. Each community is classified as either Low, Medium, or High based on how many people with COVID-19 have been admitted into local hospitals in the last week and how many local hospital beds are filled with COVID-19 patients in that week. We propose to use the CDC's COVID-19 Community Level to determine whether we should meet indoors.

M&C asked for the Meetings approval to use the CDC's COVID-19 Community Level for Buncombe County. A Friend asked if different metrics could be used for Meeting for Worship inside and mask requirements. Some families are not attending with their children because of the mask requirements. Could the mask requirement be different for upstairs versus downstairs? Robin said this will be addressed in the next proposal.

Minute #6: The Meeting approved using CDC's Covid 19 Community Level for Buncombe County to determine when we could meet indoors.

Second, we need to discern what community level we will use to determine whether we meet indoors for face-to-face Meeting for

Worship and first day school. Meeting for worship will be shared on Zoom with all scenarios. M&C proposes the following for consideration by Meeting:

- When the COVID-19 Community Level is low, we will meet indoors with masks optional. Snacks will be eaten indoors. Masks will be made available for all while attending Meeting. N95 masks will be made available for those needing one.
- When the COVID-19 Community Level is medium, we will meet indoors with masks mandatory. Snacks will be served indoors, but eaten outdoors. Masks will be made available for all people attending Meeting. N95 masks will be made available for those needing one.
- When the COVID-19 Community Level is high, we will meet exclusively on Zoom. A special called business meeting may be scheduled, if Zoom-only does not seem necessary.

This approach allows M&C to determine the safety of indoor worship each week and make a decision as needed. Each week, we will post the Community Level on the door along with our mask policy for that level. We will also post the full policy on the website, so visitors can be prepared and so they know we are being careful.

A Friend appreciated the report and would like to have upstairs be considered differently from downstairs. Children are attending schools where masks are optional, so she asked that First Day school be mask optional. She knew some families had not attended due to the mask requirement. Also asked that even if levels are high, meeting for worship still be offered inside, and people can choose to attend or not. Robin agreed this is an option and open for discussion.

Another Friend asked if some people who are vulnerable would feel excluded if it allowed mask-optional for low Community Level? Some who are vulnerable were asked, and they are comfortable with mask-optional for indoor meetings at low Community level.

Another Friend asked if we require masks for medium and high levels, but First Day school is mask optional, would the First Day children be required

to wear masks while on the first floor? A Friend who works with First Day school believes this request for masks while on the first floor is reasonable, as children can have refreshments upstairs, and can leave by the rear door if they are not wearing masks. A discussion of the proposal followed, with input from parents of First Day students and several additional Friends.

The M & C proposal was revised as follows:

- When the COVID-19 Community Level is low, we will meet indoors with masks optional. Snacks will be eaten indoors. Masks will be made available for all people attending Meeting. N95 masks will be made available for those requesting one.
- When the COVID-19 Community Level for Buncombe County is medium, we will meet indoors with masks mandatory. Snacks will be served indoors, but eaten outdoors. Masks will be made available for all people attending Meeting. N95 masks will be made available for those needing one. For First Day School, masks are optional but masks will be required downstairs.
- When the COVID-19 Community Level is high, Meeting will be on Zoom and also indoors with masks required. First Day School will be mask optional but will be required to wear masks when downstairs.

This approach allows M&C to determine the safety of indoor worship each week and make a decision as needed. Each week, we will post the Community Level on the door along with our mask policy for that level. We will also post the full policy on the website, so visitors can be prepared and so they know we are being careful.

Minute #7: The Meeting approved masks will be optional when the Level is low, and refreshments eaten indoors. Masks are required for the Levels medium and high at Meeting for Worship. First Day school will be mask-optional at all levels. Masks will be required of everyone when on the first floor, when the Levels are medium and high, with refreshments eaten

outside. Zoom will be available at all Community Levels. Information will be posted on our AFM website

The sign for the door could be worded as follows:

Welcome! We are glad you are here. Our meeting for worship will be hybrid today, including a Zoom broadcast for those unable to attend. Please do not attend in person if you have COVID or do not feel well. **Currently, the CDC COVID Community Level is Low, therefore masks are optional in the Meetinghouse.** Masks are available in the foyer for those who need one. We have a limited number of N95 masks, so please see the greeter if you need one. Please note, we encourage COVID vaccination, but do not require it for attendance at Meeting.

Update: First Day School will be mask-optional at all levels.

Different signs for different levels (low, medium and high) will be provided.

Minute #8: Meeting approved the sign as proposed, with the addition of the mask option for First Day school. M&C will be responsible for finding out what the CDC Community Level for Buncombe county is weekly and posting the sign. This information will also be on the homepage of the AFM website

A Friend suggested posting the information on Instagram but another Friend states he is unaware of us having an Instagram account. A Friend feels that an Instagram account may be a good idea, as many people use Instagram, and this will be considered. The Meeting expressed interest in establishing an Instagram account.

Religious Education Committee: Robin Wells

Request

We are excited to report that Kim Wagner has agreed to be our Youth Group Leader. Kim brings a vivacious energy and valuable experience as a Friend. She was born in Chapel Hill Friends Meeting and later grew up attending the Raleigh Friends Meeting. She attended and graduated from Olney Friends School in Ohio. She participated in Piedmont Friends Fellowship yearly sessions at Quaker Lake and has been active in our own yearly meeting sessions. But perhaps the greatest asset she brings is her deep craving for silent worship. If we can pass that on to our teens, we have done a great thing.

It is with this in mind, that the Religious Education Committee would like to request that the Meeting consider paying Kim as our Youth Group Leader, just as we pay our Childcare Provider. We propose paying her a monthly rate of \$120, basing this on 6 hours x \$20/hour. We would like this to begin immediately. We understand that this is not in the 2022 budget and will add \$360 in expenses to the 2022 Operating Budget. That is why we are bringing it for approval today. (Anticipated expenses for 2023 will be included in our proposed budget for 2023.)

Kim explained how she anticipates spending the 6 hours monthly on things such as event planning, phone calls, making reservations, youth activities, time spent with the Youth Group itself, etc.

A Friend asked that we revisit the amount of time that is allotted to pay Kim (6 Hours), if she finds she is putting in more time. Clerk said this is an issue that can be revisited as budget considerations are coming up in November and December. This will be a good time to see if the proposed 6 hours are adequate.

A member of the Religious Education Committee noted that investments in the Youth Group are investments in the future of Friends. She spoke as to how it affected her son.

Minute 7: The Meeting approved Kim Wagner as the Youth Group Leader at a salary of \$20 hour, 6 hours a month estimated, to be reconsidered if more time is spent on her work.

Satchel said money is left in the Budget for First Day school and can be used to pay Kim.

Peace and Earth: Steve Livingston

The statement that Peace and Earth (P&E) is presenting to the Meeting is not a minute proposed through the discernment of the P&E committee members, but a statement proposed as a discernment of what came out of the worship sharing session held several weeks ago concerning the entire community's feeling about the war in Ukraine and our understanding of the peace testimony.

Peace & Earth is proposing the following statement as a minute to follow up from our worship sharing on this topic:

We of Asheville Friends Meeting are deeply troubled by the ongoing war in Ukraine. We are saddened by the enormity of suffering and the vast destruction that is taking place as a result. And though our historical Peace Testimony declares that we "utterly deny" all wars and "fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretense whatsoever," and though our Faith and Practice declares that "Friends do not recognize 'just wars,'" there are many among us who do not feel led by Spirit to oppose our government's military support of the armed resistance to Russia's invasion of Ukrainian territory. There are many among us who struggle to reconcile the tension between our faithfulness to the traditional Peace Testimony and what we perceive to be the necessity of armed resistance to the military invasion, occupation, and subjugation of the Ukrainian homeland, despite our steadfast support for diplomacy as the only way to resolve conflict and our certainty that the war will otherwise continue indefinitely without resolution!

A Friend proposed that we accept the report and thank P&E for hosting the session.

Steve feels there are occasions in our spiritual journey when we as a community are conflicted as we struggle to find the right action, that not only are we not in unity as a community of seekers but perhaps also perhaps in not unity within ourselves. He stated that he was deeply moved by what was shared in the worship sharing, as many present shared their misgivings and were conflicted by the Peace Testimony that Quakers share and their personal feeling about what is happening in Ukraine. He asked for the report to be approved as a minute because he feels it does describe the condition of the Meeting at this time.

A discussion concerning whether the report should be minuted ensued and a Friend stated she herself does not feel conflicted about whether or not the US should be involved militarily in Ukraine, that things will only get worse with the US involved. Another Friend stated he was troubled by the war and the possibility of our justifying war, and noted that the war in Ukraine is not the only war going on in the world today. A different Friend felt that the Meeting is not in unity on approving a minute on this report and suggests more thought be put into this. Another Friend expressed regret at not having been able to attend the second hour worship sharing session and asked if we might not have another second hour session devoted to the subject, as we do not appear to be in unity. Other Friends agreed that this is a good report, and suggested that we accept it as a report if we do not feel ready to minute it. It was also brought up that this report, if minuted, might have an effect on future conscientious objectors, if conscription was initiated.

The sense of the meeting is that unity was not reached and more time is needed to review this and more discernment is needed.

Racial Justice Committee: Steve Livingston

Racial Justice Committee would like to reserve the available Second Hours on 1/15/23 and 2/05/23. The first will be a presentation by Ms. Bettie Council. The second will be the culmination of work that our committee will be doing through the Fall and Winter, in conjunction with the Tuesday night discussion group participants, studying and discussing Dr. Dwight Mullen's "State of Black Asheville" report and considering how we are led to be guided in our community's decision-making by what we learn and discern from study and discussion.

A Friend invited all to join these Tuesday night meetings, even if only occasionally.

The meeting closed with silent worship until the way opens for our next business in the Eleventh Month of 2022.

ATTACHMENTS:

 [AFM - Operating Activity FY2022 - As of 2022-09-30.pdf](#)

 [AFM - Fund Balances - As of 2022-09-30 \(1\).pdf](#)