

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Asheville Friends Meeting
Tenth Month 08, 2023

Present: Pat Johnson, Clerk, Barbara Esther, substitute recording clerk; Tim Burgess; Jim Barham; Jim Cavener; Margaret Farmer; Suzanne Friedrichs; Steve Livingston; Margaret Normal; Joel O'Brien; and Adrienne Weir.

Present on Zoom: Ellie Cox; Beth Eddy; Mike Eddy; Rylin Hansen; Gita Larson; Satchel Loftis; Kitti Reynolds.

The Meeting opened with Silent Worship.

The Clerk shared a reading out of silence.

Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander

Thomas Merton, copyright © New York:Doubleday, 1966, p.81

Solitude does not necessarily mean living apart from others; rather, it means never living apart from one's self. It is not about the absence of other people—it is about being fully present to ourselves, whether or not we are with others.

Agenda

Friends accepted the agenda as presented.

Approve Eighth Month Business Meeting Minutes

Approve Ninth Month Business Meeting Minutes:

Minute 1: Friends approved the minutes for both Eighth Month and Ninth Month minutes.

Announcements:

The front door of the meetinghouse has been found unlocked on several occasions. Please be sure to lock the door before placing the key in the lockbox.

Do we wish to resume hymn singing at 9:30 on First Days? Friends considered the following suggestion: Have the clerk continue to invite Friends to sing before meeting for worship. If no one attends at that time in the next month, we will no longer make the announcement in the weekly invitation to come to worship. One Friend is somewhat discouraged in that he likes to share new songs. Another Friend reminded us that visitors occasionally come at 9:30 to share in the singing. We can sing whenever those gathered want to do so, but without a designated leader, it will not be advertised as a weekly offering.

We had a request for assistance from Johnson City Medical Center Chaplains in Johnson City, TN: Edie Patrick has agreed to be a Quaker contact for the chaplains in Johnson City where she lives.

Open Letter from Becky Ledbetter

September 23, 2023

Dear Asheville Friends Community~

I wanted to express my deepest gratitude for the love and support you extended to Christopher and I over the past year during his illness. As you held him (and me) in the Light we both were able to draw on courage and resiliency that we didn't know we had. Thank you just doesn't seem to be enough to say for the cards, prayers, meditations, check-ins, the soups and food for me and providing breakfast items and snacks for Christopher's family when they came to town for his service.

All who contributed to making Christopher's Celebration of Life a deeply nurturing experience, I thank you. Zoe for all the logistical maneuvering, Pat and Robin for arranging so many parts of the service; the ZOOM (thank you Steve), the slideshow, the tables with memorabilia, the flowers, Suzanne with her lovely hammered dulcimer music, Barbara E. for facilitating the service and being such a careful guide for those who were unfamiliar with Quaker process for memorials, to all who baked cakes or brought snacks for the reception and anyone I may have failed to mention...thank you, thank you, thank you.

You all had such an important role in helping to usher Christopher on into the Great Mystery. You did it with such love and grace and peace. What a gift to give to him (and to me).
Love and Light to Each of You~

A new, the second, SAYMA cohort on Resolving Racial Conflict Transformation is forming. Please see Margaret Farmer if you're interested in joining it. Yearly Meetings beyond SAYMA were invited to join. There may be a few (10) spaces left for Friends to sign up to join. Margaret Farmer explained the format and commitment of a monthly meeting and some easily handled homework. Ask her for how to sign up. There will also be some Saturday workshops available.

Right Sharing of World Resources Visit - Sarah (RSWR Program Director) and Samson (Kenya Country Coordinator) would like to provide an evening discussion/presentation on 10/27/23. Who would like to lead the planning of this visit? Steve Livingston and Barbara Esther offered to work on the plan. Who can offer hospitality for them? They will need separate spaces.

Committees:

House and Grounds: Tim Burgess

One of the spruce trees near the driveway entrance is leaning and a neighbor has expressed concern. Duke has removed another tree in the past, but it took a long time and this tree does not threaten the power lines. Tim will explore possible tree services to do the job.

Minute 2: The meeting approved the selection of a bidder to complete the removal of the tree.

Finance: Satchel Loftis

Our annual giving is somewhat low for this time of year (50% giving at 75% of year). We can cover our outreach, and basic expenses but need the remaining money budgeted to meet our goals. It could be a problem but if contributions come in, it may not be so.

Please see Attachment at end of Minutes.

Friends accepted the Finance report with thanks.

Ministry & Counsel Report: Margaret Farmer
from Scotty Utz's Clearness Committee

A clearness committee (Vinnie Grossi, Joel O'Brien, and Margaret Farmer) met with Scotty on Sunday, August 13. George Gjelfriend did not attend, (due to a misunderstanding about how he wished to be contacted while his computer was inoperative.) Scotty has asked for a travel minute from our Meeting that he may take to other Friends' groups as he shares his ministry of supporting nonviolence and peacemaking.

Scotty shared with us relevant parts of his journey on this leading of organizing and nurturing voluntary gun surrender events, including the breakdown of the surrendered firearms and forging the gunmetal into garden tools and art pieces. He has participated in events in multiple locations, including Asheville. He shared that he was not moved to take orders as he completed divinity school, but has finally experienced, over the past few years, a leading to merge his love of the blacksmith's metal work with a deep yearning for a more peaceful and safe environment for all of us.

This ministry has been evolving for a few years now, and Scotty has slowly and carefully taken one step at a time to test his dedication to this particular path. He has learned from others and supports the work of RAWtools (rawtools.org) and of Guns to Gardens (gunstogardens.org). He has participated in gun surrender and gun breakdown events in many locations.

This clearness committee recognizes, affirms, and supports his leading as a clear call to this ministry. We find Scotty especially well-suited to this particular work: as a former hunter and gun-owner, he is well able to respond with credibility and compassion to those who possess guns. He hopes to share this ministry with many other communities at their request, providing this needed service to those who wish to surrender their firearms. In our meeting, we experience his optimism, tenderness and regard for others, as we witness his joy in life, within his family and our community, and especially in his love of this particular work. The Ministry and Counsel Committee unites with Scotty in recognizing this as a ministry.

Minute 3: Friends approved the following request: We ask the Meeting to recognize this ministry, and we recommend providing a travel minute from the Meeting. In the future, we will also consider establishing a support committee for Scotty as way and need may open.

Minute 4: The travel minute provided was heartily approved as printed below.

Travel Minute:

Dear Friends,

Asheville Friends Meeting sends your our warmest greetings as we commend our beloved Friend Scotty Utz to your tender care. Scotty travels to you in his ministry of reducing gun violence. He has unified his blacksmithing skills with his deep concern for public safety in our

homes, schools, and communities by organizing and participating in gun surrender events. These events allow people to voluntarily turn in their firearms for dismantling. The gun metal is later forged into small garden tools, other small items and art. These events also raise gun safety awareness in participating communities.

We find Scotty especially well-suited to this particular work: as a former hunter and gun-owner, he is well able to respond with credibility and compassion to those who possess guns. He hopes to share this ministry with other communities at their request, providing this needed service to those who wish to surrender their firearms for safe disposal. He has come into this work through his association with both RAWtools rawtools.org and Guns to Gardens gunstogardens.org.

We thank you for welcoming Scotty in this ministry. We share our hope for reducing gun-related violence in our communities.

Racial Justice Committee: Steve Livingston

Report from meeting with Melchor. Melchor will plan to meet with us once a month for a year and may be coming to Asheville four or five times scattered throughout the time we work together. The first of these meetings is tentatively planned for a day other than First Day in February of 2024, to continue on a monthly basis for about one year. This work can be described as a Truth and Reconciliation process.

Friends accepted the report with enthusiasm, acknowledging that Melchor considers dedication on the part of participants to be key.

Reparations Caretakers: - Steve Livingston

The caretakers used funds in the past for paying presenters who came to us from People of the Global Majority. We continue to have more money in the fund than we have used and hope to donate annually to Asheville Reparations Stakeholders Authority of Asheville. We will continue to hold \$1,500 for speakers we invite to help us in our journey of repairing damage done in the past, and the remainder of the money in the fund to be donated to RSAA annually, to be spent however they choose to do so.

Minute 4: Friends approved holding \$1,500 for speakers and donating the remaining money in the fund to Reparations Stakeholders Authority of Asheville annually.

Ma Hñakihu Presentation: - Adrienne Weir

Adrienne informed us of the presenters and the languages they speak with ease. Interpreters are being asked to assist with this presentation to provide language equity. That cost is \$230, which Adrienne offered to cover with assistance of anyone who can support this cost. Our treasurer assured us that we can absorb the cost of interpretation from one of our funds. One Friend shared her experience of interpretation as used in section and global Friends World Committee for Consultation meetings. Another shared his experience of not understanding indigenous speakers in Latin America, and how important the interpretation was to his experience.

Minute 5: Friends approved hiring interpreters from Cenzotle Language Justice Cooperative to assist all of us as Ma Hñakihu speaks with us. The estimated \$230 cost will be arranged with input from the treasurer.

The Meeting closed with silent worship until the way opens for our next Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business in the Eleventh Month, 2023.

Attachments:

[AFM - Operating Activity FY2023 - as of 09-30.pdf](#)