

Concord Quarterly Meeting at Willistown January 28, 2024

Opening Worship

Meeting was opened at 8:30 am with the clerk leading us into worship.

Welcome to Newcomers - The clerk asked newcomers to the Quarterly Meeting to introduce themselves. – Tom Martin from Birmingham Meeting and Andy Coe from Westtown Meeting were welcomed by the meeting.

Monthly Meeting Count- Twenty Friends and attenders were present at the opening of the Meeting for Business. The meetings represented were Birmingham, Goshen, Middletown, West Chester, Westtown, Willistown, Wilmington with Concord Meeting not represented.

Approval of Agenda – The agenda was approved as presented in the handout.

Approval of Minutes from October 29, 2023 - The Minutes from the last Meeting for Business in October were approved.

West Chester Area Refugee Resettlement Project Update- Susan Brodesser of Birmingham Meeting reported. The Colombian couple is doing well in an apartment in West Chester that is located near the home of a prominent Birmingham member who has been a great help to them. Medicaid coverage has been obtained for the couple. The husband now has a part time job with a local ACME supermarket. He has experience in construction work, so he is looking into employment in that field. The wife will soon be working part-time at Barclay Friends in housekeeping. WCARRP's legal commitment ends on February 7, 2024, but the group will continue supporting the couple. It was pointed out that WCARRP is an interfaith group with support coming from a number of churches and Quaker meetings in the area.

Joys and Challenges from Goshen Meeting (attached) - Sallie Welte of Goshen gave the Joys and Challenges report for Goshen Meeting, and it was accepted with gratitude.

Nominating Committee report – Rich Ailes, clerk of the Nominating Committee presented Serita Spadoni of Birmingham Meeting as the new CQM representative to PYM's Nominating Council. She replaces Deborah Lyons of West Chester Meeting who has completed her term. Cecilia Filauro, the PYM staff person supporting its Nominating Council, states that Serita's term will end after the Annual Session of, 7/31/2027. Serita's term is longer than the typical 3-year term as she was appointed after January 1. **Friends approved this appointment with appreciation.**

Nominating Committee has not met for several months. The last time the committee met there were no prospects for filling the role of Treasurer whose current term ends on July 31, 2024. If anyone has suggestions as to what Friend in the Quarter might be asked to take on this role. please send an email to concordquarter@pym.org. There is also a need for a new recording clerk for the Quarter.

Working Group on Aging Concerns- Rich Ailes presented the report. WGAC continues to meet almost monthly with about 8 Friends attending where we discuss our Meetings' issues around aging. Recently WGAC was featured in an article on PYM's news website. The group is planning a PYM-wide presentation on Driving and Aging with Susie Touchinsky, OTR/L, SCDCM, CDRS, an occupational therapy certified, driver rehabilitation specialist who will be presenting on Zoom on April 3, 2024. The group is also exploring a possible program on burial options. A subgroup also meets almost monthly to discuss concerns relating to Senior residential living. We just had a presentation to this group by two long-time residents of Senior living facilities which was well received.

Treasurer's Reports (attached) – Charles Spadoni presented the report, and it was accepted by those present. There was a question on current tuition fees charge by Quaker schools. Deb Wood, member of Westtown Meeting and former teacher at Westtown School, explained that boarding fees and tuition can run as high as \$70,000 at an upper school. She noted that Friends schools provide a considerable amount of financial aid to those in need. Individuals and constituent Meetings can contribute to the CQM Tuition Endowment Fund. So far only constituent Meetings have contributed to this fund. A question was raised about increasing the constituent Meeting's covenants to provide more tuition assistance, but there was no further discussion on this suggestion. One Friend present alerted us to the Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC). This program provides tax credits to businesses who donate funds to support a Scholarship Organization and grants to individuals through the companion Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program (OSTC). <https://dced.pa.gov/programs/educational-improvement-tax-credit-program-eitc>

Coordinator Update- Debbie Murray-Sheppard was pleased to announce that Chris Stern of Middletown Meeting will be the new Quarterly Meeting Coordinator starting on February 1, 2024. He will begin with the typical 90-day probationary period, after which, if the CQM Planning Committee approves continuing employment, his pay will be raised from \$23/hour to \$25/hour. A suggestion was raised about having the Coordinator also keep the books for the Quarter, increasing the skillset needed for the position. There was some discussion of this suggestion, but it was decided to continue the position as is. **Friends minuted their deep appreciation to Rich Ailes for his work filling in as temporary Coordinator since March 2023.**

Sharing around the Quarter – The Clerk asked Friends from the various Meeting to share current happenings.

Westtown – Peter Lane reported that the Meeting’s project for having 3 new clerks rotate into the shared position of Clerk every 4 months has in place for over a year, and it is working well.

Wilmington – Pam Cerchio reported that Wilmington’s Tri-Clerk approach has been going on for 15 years. They have three staggered terms with one clerk rotating off and one clerk rotating one every year. The Meeting currently is experiencing an increase in attendance, in part due to the Meeting’s association with Wilmington Friends School. The increase has benefitted the diversity of the membership. Also the meeting room needs to be repainted, and lead paint issues need to be mitigated. Next Sunday the meeting for worship will start being held at Wilmington Friends School for at least 4 weeks. Friends at Wilmington Meeting did apply for funds to help with the painting. An attending Friend noted that if lead paint begins to chip then that increases the cost of remediation exponentially.

Willistown –Susan Ploeg reported that several members attended the PYM Thread Gathering on Property and Burial that was held on January 27, 2024. The burial grounds piece was especially worthwhile.

Birmingham – Children and Youth Program – Gwynne Ormsby explained that kids go to school all week so why should we make them go to school on Sunday. So the Meeting has stopped using the name of First Day School! It now has a Children and Youth Program. The Meeting surveyed members who grew up in the meeting and who now have young children and urged them to start considering returning to the community. This request has increased attendance and participation considerably. The Meeting also has a strong working group that supports Indigenous communities.

Middletown – Rich Ailes reported that the Meeting’s clerk was called recently by a convenor of the local chapter of AI Anon to see if the Meeting’s facilities could be used for the group’s weekly gathering. The clerk allowed the group to meet temporarily two times in the Social Room. Then the Meeting for Business discerned that it was rightly ordered to allow the use of the Social Room for the next three months which the group was requesting so long as the Meeting was added as an additional insured under that group’s liability insurance policy. This has been done, and AI Anon now meets in the Social Room every Tuesday afternoon for their sessions.

The clerk urged Friends present to support activities at the Yearly Meeting level and also at the Quarterly Meeting level.

Reading of Minutes for Approval - Minutes of approved actions were read and approved.

Second Count of Meetings in Attendance – Representatives from Birmingham, Goshen, Middletown, West Chester, Westtown, Willistown, Wilmington were still in attendance while Concord Meeting remained without representation.

Announcements of Upcoming Events

Debbie Murray-Sheppard

Concord Quarterly Meeting Planning Committee February 4 1-3 PM at The Hickman
Concord Quarterly Meeting Square Dance February 17 7 – 8:30 PM at Willistown
Friends General Conference Gathering will be at Haverford College in person and online, June 30 to July 6
PYM Sessions in 2024 will be longer in the spring and in the fall but shorter in the summer so as not to interfere with those who attend the FGC gathering.
Delaware Valley Friends School will have their Arts Festival at the beginning of May. More information on that will be forthcoming.
Middle East Collaborative is doing online sessions on “Why Palestine Matters.” Please check the PYM calendar for registration.
PYM Continuing Sessions on March 8, 9, and 10. Please see the PYM calendar for details.
Hickman Board member Diana Hodgkins informed the Meeting that its Board is looking for members.

Unless otherwise noted, contact the Coordinator for the Zoom links (concordquarter@pym.org)
Many other programs for children, youth, and young adults appear on the PYM calendar: <https://www.pym.org/calendar/>

Respectfully submitted, Richard Ailes, Acting Recording Clerk Debbie Murray Sheppard, Clerk

Attachments

Joys and Challenges Report January 2024 - Goshen Monthly Meeting

Goshen meeting celebrates many joys as we enter the new year. We worship together faithfully each week in the meetinghouse, with several Friends attending on Zoom and three children and a dog often present. Several new attenders come regularly, and three have requested membership, including a family with two small children. We all enjoy each other’s company at Fellowship after Meeting for Worship, and though we don’t yet have a FDS, we are able to offer childcare that is age appropriate and joyous.

Our monthly adult religious education program (Meeting for Learning) occurs via Zoom, enabling Friends unable to travel or who live at a distance to participate, and a monthly “mid-week check-in” offers fellowship for those who cannot come to the meetinghouse.

Goshen's lease with West Chester Area School District ended December 31, and we are grateful for the property repairs and improvements that resulted from this contract. Our relationship with Goshen Friends School is collaborative, and we anticipate sharing both space and operating expenses this fall if the school continues to grow. We have planned a morning coffee for any school parents interested in or curious about Quakers.

The challenge of being a small meeting and needing to do the work of the meeting is a continuing issue at Goshen and has been even more so without two seasoned Friends who moved. We miss their presence and their experience. At times we find ourselves stretched too thin and unable to meet the needs of increasingly infirm Friends. The meeting is also entering a period of belt-tightening as rental income from the school district ends, and we need to be ever more mindful of our resources and our commitments.

Two few Friends wear too many hats, and so we are finding our way together.

**Concord Quarterly Meeting Treasurer's Report For The First Half Of The Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024
Un-reviewed Financial Statements (Except As May Be Noted Below, Reported On A Cash Basis)**

NOTES

- On September 14, 2023, the \$13,152 in the Tuition Operating Fund was distributed to four Quaker Schools (Westtown, West Chester Friends, Wilmington Friends and Virginia Beach Friends) in the form of tuition grants for the benefit of 16 students. Each grant was for \$822.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

INCOME STATEMENT

**Revenues and Expenses for the First Half of the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2024
Compared to the
Revenues and Expenses for the First Half of the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2023
(numbers are redacted, contact the Coordinator for a full report)**

BALANCE SHEET

**December 31, 2023 Balance Sheet Versus the prior Fiscal Year's December 30 Balance Sheet
(numbers are redacted, contact the Coordinator for a full report)**

- There are no liabilities; however, the aggregate amount in the Tuition Operating Fund has been reserved to make tuition assistance payments in the fall of 2024.

*Checking Account 2 (used by the former Coordinator to pay Quarter expenses) was closed on March 23, 2023.

**Individual constituent monthly meeting Dec. 31, 2023, Growth & Income Fund market value balances are available upon request.

Respectfully submitted, Charles B. Spadoni, Treasurer

January 28, 2024