

## **Concord Quarterly Meeting Minutes July 19, 2020**

### **Opening Worship—Debbie Murray-Sheppard**

The meeting opened at 8:30 AM with a period of worship. Nineteen friends were present as the meeting began.

### **Welcome to Newcomers--Debbie Murray-Sheppard (Clerk)**

The clerk welcomed all newcomers and invited them to introduce themselves. Jen Karsten, Executive Director from the Hickman introduced herself. The clerk welcomed Tonya Thames Taylor from Western Quarter as well.

### **Monthly Meeting Count (Birmingham, Concord, Goshen, Middletown--Debbie Murray-Sheppard West Chester, Westtown, Willistown, Wilmington, Chichester)**

Nineteen representatives were present from all meetings in the Quarter except Chichester Meeting.

### **Approval of Agenda--Debbie Murray-Sheppard**

The group approved the agenda, with the change of presenter for the DVFS/CQCare Committee Report from Ginny Sutton to Gary Goodman.

### **Approval of Minutes from April 26, 2020--Debbie Murray-Sheppard**

The minutes from April were approved as presented.

### **Joys and Challenges Report from Goshen Meeting (attached)--Laura Laky**

Laura Laky presented the joys and challenges report from Goshen Meeting. The Meeting is now meeting outdoors as weather permits. When the group meets there is also a connection available on Zoom for those who can't be present in person.

### **Joys and Challenges Report from West Chester Meeting (attached)--Deb Lyons**

Deb Lyons gave the joys and challenges report from West Chester Meeting. Appreciation was expressed for the "Open Door" committee. The Meeting is using a wireless internet connection. Tonya Thames Taylor expressed appreciation to the Meeting for using a Pendle Hill pamphlet for a study group.

### **Report from The Hickman (attached)--Jennifer Karsten**

Jennifer Karsten, Executive Director of the Hickman, gave the yearly report to the Quarter from the Hickman. The Hickman has had no residents with COVID-19 infections to date and they continue to work to keep the residents safe. Jen thanked the Concord Quarter Meetings for their support for the Hickman. The Hickman is recruiting volunteers for a safety team to help with screening family visitors to the Hickman and would appreciate anyone who is interested to contact her. The Hickman currently has openings for new residents.

### **Report from DVFS/Concord Quarter Care Committee (attached)—Gray Goodman**

Gray Goodman, a faculty member at Delaware Valley Friends School, gave the report from the school's Care Committee. The school had distance learning in the spring via Zoom. In the fall the school will meet in person with student distancing and other safety precautions in place. The meeting held the school, faculty, and students in the

Light.

**Treasurer's Report (attached)--Charles Spadoni**

Charles Spadoni gave the Treasurer's report. The clerk thanked Charlie for his work on the budget. The Quarter had approved next year's budget at the last Quarterly meeting.

**Working Group on Aging Concerns Report (attached)--Rich Ailes**

Rich Ailes gave a report from the Working Group on Aging Concerns. In October the group will be presenting a workshop by Susan Hoskins on senior housing for Friends of modest income.

**Coordinator Report (attached)--Lynne Piersol**

Lynne Piersol, Coordinator for Concord Quarter gave a report. She has been helping the meetings in the Quarter with Zoom meetings and is willing to help with Zoom issues if meetings need help. She is archiving documents at the Friends Historical Library. The Quarter documents are also backed up on iDrive for \$60 per year. Lynne would like to know if meetings in the Quarter are working on racial justice issues so she can share resources. Debbie Murray-Sheppard invited friends to join the Quarter's Planning Committee next Sunday at 2 PM via Zoom. If interested, let Lynne Piersol know and she will email a link for the Zoom meeting.

**The Meeting discussed the following query: "What steps are we taking as a meeting to inform ourselves about social injustice and ecological violence embedded in our political and economic systems" – Faith and Practice, p.211--Debbie Murray-Sheppard and group**

Wilmington Friends Meeting had a Black Lives Matter demonstration at the Meeting house on July 4<sup>th</sup> with 150 people attending. Wilmington Friends Meeting is doing outreach to the community.

Westtown Meeting's Peace and Social Concerns Committee is looking at how to stay in relationship with Westtown School on the issues of social justice and ecological issues.

West Chester Meeting has started a racial justice group. Students from West Chester Friend's School participated in a climate march on September 19, 2019, and they also attended a meeting in the West Chester Borough to advocate for change to help the environment.

**Reading of Minutes for Approval--Marty Boston (Recording Clerk)**

Marty Boston reported that there were no action items from today's meeting.

**Second Count of Meetings and Members in Attendance--Marty Boston (Recording Clerk)**

There were 20 people present at the end of the meeting. All meetings except Chichester were represented.

**Announcements of Upcoming Events (all also on the CQ website calendar)--Debbie Murray-Sheppard**

- July 22, 7-9pm: Braver Angels Skills Workshop via Zoom with Jen Elam and Madelena Rizzo. Please register and make sure you view the online module before the workshop. Module is available to view even if you do not come. Register:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUofuqopzIvHtZA8pGbVpMB3fe3G8qBbNwp>

- July 26, 2pm: CQ Planning Committee via Zoom. Open to anyone interested in the activities of the Quarter. Contact the Coordinator for the link at [concordquarter@pym.org](mailto:concordquarter@pym.org)
- July 28-August 3 via Zoom: PYM Annual Sessions. Programs for all ages. Free! Register on the PYM website. Check out the workshops and plenaries ahead of time. <https://www.pym.org/> (scroll down to the calendar)
- August 5, 10:30am-noon: Concord Quarter Working Group on Aging Concerns via Zoom. Open to anyone interested in aging concerns. This session will feature a guest speaker, Linda Sterthous, talking about Barclay Friends at 11:15. Contact the Coordinator for the link at [concordquarter@pym.org](mailto:concordquarter@pym.org)

## Goshen Monthly Meeting “Joys and Challenges”

### Report to Concord Quarter April 2020

Goshen Meeting counts the return to worship of several members who have been absent as a joy.

We are also grateful for having funds to keep up our meetinghouse and grounds.

The Meeting feels gratitude that we have a community that can hold ourselves in spirit.

We are glad to have had weekly check-in times using Zoom.

We are managing this way at present.

The Meeting has been leasing our empty schoolroom wing to West Chester Area

School District, and they use the space for Kindergarten classes until new classrooms can be added by the district. This arrangement has been a welcome source of income. as well as a way for a Friends Meeting to support public education.

It has been an ongoing challenge for our Meeting to accomplish the things that need doing with a limited number of active members. Filling roles and committee spots can be difficult.

The need to close our Meetinghouse during the COVID-19 restrictions has been challenging.

We are beginning to work on possible ways for outreach, believing that our Meeting and the larger Quaker society are worth sharing and growing.

## West Chester Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

### 2019/2020 Joys and Challenges: A "State of the Meeting" Report

Submitted 12:30 Friday afternoon on 7/17/20

#### **A NEW APPROACH TO AN OLD CHALLENGE: PROVIDING A SPACE TO ENHANCE WORSHIP WITHIN OUR MEETING**

West Chester Monthly Meeting first gathered for worship in an 1813-built Meetinghouse of local serpentine stone sited toward the northwest corner of what eventually came to be called West Chester's "Quaker Block." Friends Community School (today "West Chester Friends School") was built to that first building's east in 1836. In 1868, the original Meetinghouse was expanded with a brick addition large enough to accommodate separate men's and women's Meetings. In 1891, Quakers Lydia Hall and Sallie Sharpless, recognizing a high risk of poverty among older single women, initiated an effort to add a new building on the Block's northeast corner. First called the "Friends Boarding Home," its expanded operation today is known as The Hickman retirement community, offering independent-living apartments and a "memory care" section.

In all the above-mentioned construction, however, until quite recently one question remained largely unaddressed: how to make our Meeting and the gatherings it hosts more accessible to worshipers and visitors with impaired mobility who need assistance from a wheelchair, crutches, a cane or walker, or even (for parents of small children) a baby stroller. But in the past several months, after considering electrical lifts and other "power-assisted" approaches, what we have come to call the "Open Doors" committee has settled on a set of solutions, based on design, that can enable us to make our Meetinghouse more welcoming to people with mobility challenges and also preserve the building's architectural integrity. An ongoing internal campaign, successful and ongoing grant applications, and the Meeting's careful financial stewardship are enabling us to move forward with what is our most substantial capital project in 150 years.

Our intention is to accomplish this work in cooperation with West Chester Friends School, coordinating with the School to assist in such needs as ensuring availability of the "social distancing" space required to provide students a safe learning environment while Coronavirus infection remains a hazard.

#### ADDRESSING OTHER "STATE OF THE MEETING" REPORT QUESTIONS

**Practices and strategies to help members and attenders prepare for worship; deepening and strengthening our personal spiritual journeys and the spiritual life of the Meeting:** At least twice yearly, our Worship and Ministry Committee arranges for or leads reading and discussion of a text such as a particular part of the Bible, a Pendle Hill pamphlet, or some other written reflection on spirituality. Last October we invited and listened deeply to Marcelle Martin as she led us in contemplating her book "Supporting One Another on Our Spiritual Journey." In two sessions this month, we read and responded to Barry Crosno and J. Brent Bill's PH pamphlet "On Vocal Ministry." That reading also engendered a useful discussion about dealing with difficult or troubling messages in Meeting. Two attenders, a husband and wife who join us frequently and who also visit and reflect back with us on their experiences in other Meetings, provided a spark for much thoughtful conversation in the second of those sessions.

**Work that reflects our testimonies: See "A New Approach," above.** Also: Engaging in a rethinking of our committee structure--and encouraging Friends to "stick a toe into" the work of an unfamiliar committee. And a look, led by our Treasurer, at the contributions Meeting "routinely" makes to organizations and whether/how we may want to do some further review in this area.

And finally:

“MAKING LEMONADE” (as in “When Life hands You Lemons . . . ” )

After the Governor of Pennsylvania issued directives limiting in-person gatherings, WCMM’s then co-Clerks conferred with representatives of our Worship and Ministry Committee and our Care of Meeting Committee, our Youth RE coordinator, and others to consider whether, where, and how to continue holding Meeting for Worship.

With the technical expertise of Worship and Ministry clerk Todd Krasnai and the distance-conferencing experience of Youth RE Clerk Melinda Wenner Bradley, a plan was developed: Continue opening the Meeting House for First Day worship at the usual 10:30 time (for up to ten Friends), but also offer on-line connection by Zoom to Friends’ homes, starting with a child-focused first half-hour (stories, discussions, other activities as initiated by the day’s Youth RE leader) at 10:00, and then settling into silent worship for an hour beginning at our normal 10:30 AM start time—with children who choose to stay “in Meeting”, as well as adults, welcome to do so and to speak out of the silence.

Unexpected Joys: Friends we hadn’t heard from in a while, or who have moved away, have found our on-line presence and in some cases are continuing to “drop in.” Some folks newer to Friends seem to be finding being “on line” a comfortable entry point. Children seem to find contributing their thoughts easier there—and can be thanked, then or afterward, for contributing.

Submitted by Deborah Lyons, West Chester MM

**July 2020**

## **The Hickman Annual Report to Concord and Western Quarter Joint Quarterly Meeting**

[The Hickman](#) Friends Senior Community of West Chester offers warm Greetings to Friends throughout Concord and Western Quarters. Now in our 129<sup>th</sup> year as a welcoming community for older adults, we continue to offer an engaging, caring, home-like residential environment.

In the time since we reported to you last July, the world around us has changed and the way we work and live here reflects that. Some of the bigger developments we experienced over the year include:

1. SEPTEMBER: A thoughtful executive leadership transition, from Pamela Leland to Jennifer Karsten.
2. OCTOBER/NOVEMBER: We initiated a strategic planning process, developed an exciting multi-year financial plan, and expanded our staff benefits & communications offerings.
3. DECEMBER: We finished our 2019 initiatives and prepared for a 2020 year to include programs in horticulture, nutrition, Quakerism (with visits from representatives of FCNL, QVS, AFSC, and others, open to the public), and some ecological elements outdoors. For example, in partnership with our next-door neighbor, West Chester Friends School, we began to install bee-hives and planned for chicken-keeping to bolster our time outdoors and supply of fresh food for the kitchen.
4. JANUARY/FEBRUARY: We started living into the plans for 2020, including final preparations for our yearly event *The Art of Caring* which raises funds for Resident Assistance. The Resident Assistance program allows us to cover fees for residents experiencing financial hardship. This long-time commitment to our residents reflects our view that no resident should have to leave The Hickman due to a change in their financial

circumstances, nor should they worry about that while we work to craft a long-term solution. But, even as our event plans were coming together, the threat of a new virus was beginning to make news. We chose to cancel that event and the remainder of our in-person gatherings for the foreseeable future.

5. FEBRUARY/MARCH: COVID-19 introduced us to a wealth of new thinking, new tactics, new protocols, and a heightened awareness of transmission pathways. We put our original 2020 plans on hold, re-directing our focus to protecting resident-community health. We canceled the big fundraiser just weeks before its date, and made early decisions to mask everyone and prohibit non-essential visitors.
6. APRIL/MAY: We accepted that COVID-19 would not be a “passing concern” and deepened our commitment to learning about the balance between long-term prevention and life-quality. For sake of the staff and the residents (and their families), we studied and discussed multiple ways of staying safe over an extended period while having good lives. Our Staff and our Board’s COVID Task Force groups worked quickly and harmoniously to implement new practices once their value was determined. Ultimately, we chose to be especially vigilant against the disease – at the cost of family members having time with their loved ones in residence; the staff enjoying liberties previously considered “normal” (food delivery, hugs); and residents making do with decreases in communal dining, outings, parties, and other routine activities.
7. JUNE/JULY: As the months have unfolded, the virus has become a lens over every plan and decision we make, and it’s both wearying and motivating. Weariness comes from hearing the ache from loved ones who cannot have proper visits with elderly relatives – and not having a way to “make it better”. Motivation comes from discovering “what’s possible” and seeing the endurance and creativity of everyone trying to make an acceptable path for themselves and for everyone else. Who could have guessed we would be using Virtual Reality and Facetime with people in their 80s and 90s this year? Who would have imagined everyone having their temperatures taken at work daily, or all staff and Board meetings occurring “virtually?”

We know that each of you is also living into all of this “change” – much of it unwelcome. We want to thank the many of you throughout Concord and Western Quarters who have been working on behalf of Aging Concerns; the individuals and Monthly Meetings who have reached out to support us with masks, prayers, supplies, and financial contributions. We feel the caring from you and wish to reciprocate it. It is our view that despite all that’s especially difficult right now, one “silver lining” is the comfort in knowing ourselves as part of a group (or multiple groups) in which the mission is uplifting to you. So...

If you or someone you know would be interested in deepening your relationship with us, we welcome you to consider one of the many doors into the Hickman community. Board or committee membership, offering an educational course or presentation to our residents, notifying us of grants available through an organization in which you’re involved, volunteering with us (even now!)...and, if we can support you or a loved one through consideration of moving here (now or down the line), we would be happy to do all we can to make an inspiring and easy Yes possible. Be well, Friends. We are grateful for you.

*Submitted by Jen Karsten, Executive Director, on behalf of Betsy Stratton, Board Chair, and Andrea Taylor, Governance Committee Clerk.*

## **Report from Concord Quarter/DVFS Care Relationship Committee**

Concord Quarterly Meeting July 19, 2020

At the January 13, 2020 meeting of the Care Relationship Committee it was noted that the presentation by DVFS at October's Quarterly Meeting was excellent and resulted in Quarter members becoming more acquainted with the school, its students, and its programs. Also noted: the November Tour and Worship at DV, which was attended by several Quarter and Board members, was informative and inspiring and the committee's annual report was submitted to the Quarter in January.

Susan Brodesser, representing the Care Relationship Committee, has attended three of the school's Quaker Life Committee Meetings. This is a Board committee that consists of several Board members, administrators, teachers, and representatives from each of the school's committees and clubs. Susan has been impressed by the depth of the students' consideration of such questions as, "In which of the testimonies is DV most/least strong?"; "How might the resources of the Quaker Life Committee be best used?"; "How might the Quaker aspect of the school be enhanced?". One response to the last question was that the committee might seek Quarter assistance in fine tuning their business meetings.

The committee's April 14, 2020, meeting was conducted via Zoom, due to COVID. David Calamaro, Associate Head of School and Academic Dean, reported that "everyone is working very hard to pull together, taking care of ourselves and one another". He said that DV was in a good position to offer education electronically as the systems were already in place.

Gray Goodman, teacher and head of the Social Studies department, said that teachers have learned to do distance learning and they're doing lots of individual follow-up with students. He also noted that for some students distance learning has benefits in that there are fewer distractions. For others, it can be harder to keep up with assignments. Students are appreciative of the fact that schedules are designed so they can have face time with all students, not just those in their small classes.

Christa Harp, DVFS trustee, reported that the Board is continuing to meet via Zoom and is working to support and express appreciation for staff and faculty.

Disappointingly, student service projects that had been planned for May at Birmingham, Westtown, and Wilmington meetings had to be cancelled due to COVID.

The next meeting of the Care Relationship Committee is planned for September 15, 2020, at 3:15 pm. All are invited to attend; contact Susan or Lynne if you wish to participate.

Susan Brodesser, clerk

Concord Quarter/Delaware Valley Friends School Care Relationship Committee

**CONCORD QUARTERLY MEETING TREASURER'S REPORT**

**Unreviewed Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2020**

**(Except as Noted Below, Reported on a Cash Basis)**

- Meeting covenant contributions received after June 30, 2020, were treated as being made on June 30, 2020.
- The Planning Committee approved the payment to the Coordinator of an additional \$1,000. For administrative reasons, \$112 was paid prior to the end of the June 30, 2020 fiscal year, and the balance of \$888 was paid on July 10, 2020. Had the full amount been paid during the June 30, 2020, fiscal year, net operating revenue would have been approximately \$956 less than the amount that is stated below.
- Following the recommendation of the "Friendly Review Committee" and thanks to Lynn Piersol's efforts, the Quarter's financial information is now being backed up daily onto IDrive's "cloud."

**June 30, 2020 Fiscal Year-End Revenues and Expenses Compared to the Budgeted Revenues and Expenses for the Same Period**

*Financial figures redacted, contact Coordinator for a full report*

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>
	<u>July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020</u>	<u>July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020</u>
Operating Revenues/Expenses		
Restricted Revenues/Expenses		

**June 30, 2020 Balance Sheet Prior Year Comparison**

- There are no liabilities. *(Financial figures redacted, contact Coordinator for a full report)*

Note: Individual monthly meeting Growth & Income Fund and Green Fund balances are available by request.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles B. Spadoni, Treasurer

July 19, 2020

## **Concord Quarter Working Group on Aging Concerns Report to Concord Quarterly Meeting Virtual Session 07/19/2020**

Rich Ailes, Clerk

We continue to meet regularly, with the past few months meeting virtually via ZOOM. Anyone interested is welcome to attend our meetings and become part of the group. Meeting times are usually from 10:30 AM until 12 PM, the first Wednesday of the month. Our group has met seven times since I last reported at the October 2019 Quarterly Meeting.

Our major event happened shortly after that Quarterly Meeting with a presentation by Carol Bernard of Hockessin Meeting on Downsizing at Willistown Meeting on November 16. About 35 people were present to hear Carol's lively and informative talk with accompanying slides. Because of Lynne Piersol's Facebook publicity we even had a few non-Friends show up.

Our planning meetings have included guest speakers on relevant topics. June Lunney on Aging Trajectories, Jen Karsten and Jen Harris on Life at The Hickman, and John Schwab on helping a parent and an in-law get into Senior housing, have all provided very helpful information to our group. We have also produced with the help of one of our members a useful aging checklist called "At Your Fingertips", a fill in the blanks form for necessary information one should have available before one becomes infirm.

The group continues to use our sessions to check in and support one another on our mutual experiences around aging issues in our own lives and in our Meetings. In June we did take time to reflect on the pain we and our country were going through as the result of George Floyd's death.

We meet again the first Wednesday in August. On the agenda is planning for a workshop on Senior Housing for Friends of Modest Income presented by Susan Hoskins, the director of Friends Foundation on Aging. At that planning meeting we will decide on whether to hold the workshop virtually or in person. Susan is an accomplished speaker on the topic and has done this kind of workshop virtually to much acclaim.

For more information, you can contact Lynne Piersol at [concordquarter@pym.org](mailto:concordquarter@pym.org) or the clerk, Rich Ailes at [railesjr@ailesdodson.org](mailto:railesjr@ailesdodson.org).

## **Concord Quarter Coordinator Report, July 19, 2020**

Following a very successful Quarterly Meeting in January at West Chester Meeting, and then the annual Square Dance at Willistown in February, we were faced with the COVID 19 pandemic. Since March 12, I have been working 100% from home, with the assistance of a Zoom account which allows me to visit meetings virtually, continue with committee meetings, the abbreviated April Quarterly Meeting and subsequent CQ Planning Committee meetings. I sent numerous resources to meetings about how to use Zoom (and coached a few people with it), about virtual meetings for business, and about the hybrid model of worship which combines online and in person worship. West Chester Meeting pioneered this model from the beginning of the pandemic, and included a children's program online. More recently I have sent along information about what to consider when planning to reopen meetinghouses with resources from Friends General Conference and the CDC. And I have worked with the Western Quarter Coordinator to help plan this Quarterly Meeting and the Braver Angels workshop on July 22.

Then in May George Floyd was murdered, and I shared some racial justice resources with meetings, especially from other Quaker organizations. I am very interested in hearing what meetings are doing in this area, and possibly connecting them with each other around this work if that is of interest. Let me know if there is something I can do to support you.

I continue to support the Working Group on Aging Concerns which has met virtually several times since March, as well as the Delaware Valley Friends School/Concord Quarter Care Committee which met virtually in April. Planning Committee has met an extra time to decide about the format of today and will be meeting on July 26 to consider next steps. Other projects include working on a document retention policy for the Quarter, as well as archiving documents at Friends Historical Library (2016-19 documents were sent digitally)

A joy was to help create the June 27 virtual "Everyone's Got Talent" event with Western Quarter. We wanted to have an event for connection, fun and sharing since we could not safely plan the annual Tubing on the Brandywine event. The event was described as "sweet" by one; we had 8 performers of all ages who shared instrumental and vocal music, quilts, visual art, poetry and essays. The audience was small but very appreciative. We learned a lot putting this together, partly thanks to a connection made with Portland Meeting (Maine) which has done several similar events. Maybe we'll do it again!

Current challenges include making decisions about future events as the pandemic continues. If we stay in virtual mode, how do we stay in community? In person gatherings continue to be risky, especially indoors. How do we continue to engage families with children? We worked hard to encourage families to attend Quarterly Meeting and other events, and in January we were overjoyed to welcome the most children to Quarterly Meeting (19) during my time as Coordinator. There is lots of competition online for children – from school to other things, so we will need to be creative to keep them and their parents engaged. All ideas welcome...

Lynne Piersol