

Concord Quarter at Westtown October 29, 2023 Minutes of Combined Business Meeting and Planning Committee

Opening Worship - The clerk asked the meeting to approve Rich Ailes as the temporary recording clerk - Meeting approved

Welcome to Newcomers – The clerk asked if there were anyone new to the Meeting for Business who would like to introduce themselves. As no newcomers were present the meeting proceeded.

Monthly Meeting Count was taken - Birmingham, Goshen, Middletown, Westtown, Willistown, Wilmington. Concord and West Chester representatives were not present.

Approval of Agenda The agenda as presented was approved with some revisions.

Approval of Minutes from July 23, 2023, at Birmingham was requested. These minutes were approved.

Welcome Corp Refugee Program Report (attached) - Susan Brodesser reported in addition to the attached report, the group is searching for an apartment for the couple from Colombia hoping to find something for \$1500 / month. This is a Spanish speaking couple so this may help with employment opportunities. The group plans one year of support for the couple. One of the members of the group will host the couple till they find lodging. AirBnB may provide a grant but there is an issue with government needing to know address location of the housing immediately. The acting coordinator will send out a fundraising appeal to CQM email lists at the end of November.

Joys and Challenges Report from Middletown Meeting (attached) - Meeting accepted with gratitude the report from Middletown Meeting presented by member Chris Stern.

Nominating Committee report - Rich Ailes, clerk of Nominating brought forward the name of Steve Kupferschmid of Willistown Meeting to serve on the Delaware Valley Friends School Care Relationship committee. It is a 3-year term that will end June 2026. Ginny Sutton and Susan Brodesser are the other members of this committee. **Meeting approved the appointment with gratitude.** Nominating Committee is searching for a recording clerk to fill an immediate vacancy and a treasurer to begin at the July 2024. The current members of the Quarter Nominating Committee are Julie Senko (Birmingham), Lisa Vosburg (West Chester), Peter Lane (Westtown) and clerk Rich Ailes (Middletown)

Climate Action Working Group (CAWG) - Paula Kline updated the Meeting on the status of the group. She had submitted the request to lay down the Quarter's working group after conducting several successful events along with the PYM Ecojustice collaborative. There have been requests put out for someone to step forward as the leadership of this group but no one has taken up the request. A Friend asked that getting alerts from the Ecojustice Collaborative be made known through an email using the CM email lists. **Friends approved that the working group be laid down with much appreciation to the group for their work. Paula Kline will send a letter to the coordinator to be posted on the group web page and be emailed out to the CQM email lists. Also, an article addressing this will be placed in the next CQM newsletter.**

Working Group on Aging Concerns – Rich Ailes reported the Working Group continues to meet the first Wednesday of the month. Interest remains strong amongst a small group. The group is currently handling clerking duties on a month-to-month basis. The group is currently planning a Zoom presentation on Driving Concern and Seniors.

Small Meeting Support - Debbie Murray-Shepard reported the October 19 Zoom session was well attended with 19 participants including Friends from the Quarter's small meetings. The Small Meeting notes should be sent out to the CQM email lists at the next Announcements email. David Leonard and David Jones from Birmingham are offering their support regarding legal issues which Goshen is experiencing. Sallie Welte of Goshen welcomed their support.

Birmingham noted the addition of an attender who came to a pollinator garden event. Also, someone who'd been to the Meeting's grounds for a non-meeting event also came to worship. The Zoom session was well appreciated by those attending, although a concern was raised that we didn't address what it is that we have to offer newcomers. Another noted that we need to have a consistent group of participants show up each week to keep that sense of community going. How do we help people be consistently connected? Zoom does not facilitate the social interaction needed to make this happen. Is a food social after Meeting helpful? Yes! How about emphasizing the joy of ministry or the call to speak. Birmingham had a Meeting for Poetry instead of Meeting for Worship. Is it time to be thinking out of the box? The clerk asked what the next thing is to be done. **It was proposed another Zoom session on Small Meeting support at the call of the clerk. This was approved.**

Treasurer's Reports (attached) - Charles Spadoni presented the treasurer's report. There was a question regarding who is eligible for tuition grants. Any child who is a member, or any child who has a least one parent or a guardian who is a member, of one of the Quarter's constituent monthly meetings other than Wilmington MM (which decided not to participate in the Quarter's tuition assistance payment program), who is in a grade from kindergarten to 12th, and who attends a Quaker school that is recognized as such by the Friends Council on Education. The treasurer's report was accepted with appreciation.

Review of October Program at Westtown – Friends present overwhelmingly felt a wonderful Meeting for Worship occurred with the children present during the whole worship. The only suggestion lifted up was that children should be given the play materials after the Faith & Play session as they did not seem to be paying attention to the presentation.

Planning for Quarterly Meeting at Willistown – Betsy Swan, clerk of Willistown, presented the Meeting’s suggestion that the program for next Quarterly Meeting be a working time for Friends and attenders from all the Meetings share their joys and challenges which their individual committees are currently having. This suggestion was approved. Schedule for the meeting is as follows:

Meeting for Business 8:30 to 9:45
Meeting for Worship 10:00 to 11:00
Program 11:15 to 12:15
Lunch 12:15 to 1:15

After a discussion of timing of the next planning committee Friends approved going back to earlier format where the business of the Quarter would occur at the beginning of this Quarterly Meeting. The Quarterly Meeting Planning committee would occur the following week at the Hickman.

Suggestions for the next QM newsletter were offered: QM emphasis article – How can committee work support the beloved community, Article on graveyard management, reaction to Meeting for Worship at Westtown, a CAVG update, an article on the West Chester Area Refugee Resettlement Project, and an article on LGBTQ+ welcoming.

The minutes of the Meeting were read and approved. A 2nd Monthly Meeting Count was taken - Birmingham, Goshen, Middletown, Westtown, Willistown, Wilmington. Concord and West Chester representatives were not present.

Debbie Murray-Sheppard, Clerk

Rich Ailes Temporary Recording Clerk

Reports

West Chester Area Refugee Resettlement Project report for QM at Westtown

After six months of planning, preparing a detailed Welcome Plan, and submitting our application to the U.S. State Department's Welcome Corps program, the West Chester Area Refugee Resettlement Project is pleased to report that we were certified as a Private Sponsor Group on September 28, 2023. We were matched with two Colombian refugees, a married couple, aged 29 and 23, on October 5, and on October 20 received notice that they will arrive on November 7. The couple speak, read, and write Spanish; they have no English language skills.

We've raised about half the money we estimate will be needed to ensure our couple will be supported until they are able to support themselves. The actual amount will primarily depend on how quickly our newcomers can get jobs. Team members have been working on securing and furnishing initial housing, gathering clothing, and planning initial meals and stocking the pantry. After arrival we will be assisting our newcomers in obtaining Social Security numbers and Employment Authorization, finding employment, connecting with government and local resources (e.g., for food, medical care, ESL classes), and becoming familiar with American culture and our community. - Susan Brodesser, coordinator - WCARRP

Joys and Challenges Report October 2023 - Middletown Monthly Meeting

Note: this is an amended report of the Spiritual State of the Meeting report sent to PYM in April 2023

Our Worship and Care Committee meets monthly and reviews the status and needs of our aging members and attenders and outreach is made to offer assistance as needed. We continue to offer hybrid worship, in person and on Zoom to accommodate the needs of our members and attenders. We have strengthened the technical aspects of our Zoom worship so that there is better and more consistent connection.

The Meeting dealt with the way our majority European-centric culture approaches our indigenous peoples by providing a Quarterly Meeting program that informed us of PYM's First Contact Reconciliation Collaborative work to enhance respect and dignity for tribal nations that exist and thrive in the present. It also highlighted past colonial events which forced indigenous peoples out of their homelands. One member wrote an article for our Quarterly Meeting newsletter demonstrating how the influx of Quaker settlers did this for our own Lenape people in the 17th and 18th century. Four of our members also attended an exhibition of indigenous photographer Will Wilson at the Delaware Art Museum which portrayed negative stereotypical images of Native peoples alongside present-day images which gave a more respectful presentation of their lives.

We strive for our meeting to be good stewards of God's creation and God's loving presence in our greater community in times of disaster and recovery. Although our meetinghouse is not equipped to offer temporary shelter to disaster victims, we can be a resource to our community in other ways: a gathering space for worship/meditation, prayer vigils, healing services, support and relief to emergency responders (coffee, soup, etc). The Meeting collaborated with our township emergency management department to develop a disaster preparedness plan for our meeting property and offered our assistance to first responders if the need arises. We participated in educational workshops hosted by Concord Quarter Climate Action Working Group (CAWG) appointing Climate Witness Liaisons to this group.

Our focus and deep concern always is to ground our actions in faith. We are aware we can't will our way to spiritual health on our own by trying to perform our testimonies without the power that is available to us through Christ. To that end, eight adult education classes were held to discern the question "What did Jesus query?" from the accounts of Mark's gospel and Luke's gospel in May and June of 2022 and Matthew's gospel and Luke's gospel in October and November 2022.

Our meeting is very small, and discussion is ongoing related to growth and sustainability of our meeting. The worship and Care

committee used the booklet Grow Your Meeting from Friends General Conference as a basis for this discussion. What is God calling our meeting to do with energy, love and caring? We continue to take opportunities for prayer and sincere soul searching on this question.

Additional items of note since this statement was approved. The Meeting took savings from our tree fund and purchased and planted 7 native shrubs to create a pollinator garden. The Meeting hosted its annual Middletown Day which included a luncheon potluck attended by about 20 members and attenders held after our June 5 Meeting for Worship. We supported Chris Stern's leading to travel in the UK accompanying Oxford Meeting member Matt Rosen as an elder in support of Matt's travel in the ministry. The Meeting used a grant from the PYM's Quaker Building & Projects Granting Group to replace the roofing on its social room and outside front porch. We had an emergency replacement of the Meeting room boiler at a cost on \$8,000. We recently had Paul Indorf, former member of PYM's Membership Development group, come and lead a discussion of our Meeting's outreach needs. - Submitted by Rich Ailes – Clerk

**CONCORD QUARTERLY MEETING TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE FISCAL YEAR
ENDING September 30, 2023**

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.
- The amount in the Reserve Fund has been invested in part in a certificate of deposit that matures on June 21, 2024.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
INCOME STATEMENT**

**Revenues and Expenses for the First Quarter of the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2024 Compared to the
Revenues and Expenses for the First Quarter of the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2023**

(numbers are redacted, contact the Coordinator for a full report)

BALANCE SHEET

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

- There are no liabilities; however, \$11 in the Tuition Operating Fund has been reserved to make tuition assistance payments in the future.

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

**These FFC accounts have been closed.

**** Individual constituent monthly meeting Sept. 30, 2023, Growth & Income Fund market value balances are available upon request.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles B. Spadoni, Treasurer
October 29, 2023