



November 2018

Minutes & Reports

Friends Meeting at Cambridge

Meeting for Business in Worship

October 14, 2018

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Friends Meeting at Cambridge (FMC) gathered in a Meeting for Business in Worship on Sunday, October 14, at 1:15pm. The Meeting was convened by Ian Harrington, Co-Presiding Clerk, after a period of silent worship, with 44 people present. The Clerk opened the Meeting by reading from Thomas S. Brown, *When Friends Attend to Business*:

Since our method of transacting business presumes that in a given matter there is a way that is in harmony with God's plan, our search is for that right way, and not simply for a way which is either victory for some faction, or an expedient compromise. In a Meeting that is rightly ordered no one wins or loses, but Truth prevails

Everyone has the privilege and the duty to lay before the Meeting whatever relevant insight one may possess. Out of this sharing of light may come a greater light which would not have been possible had some refrained from speaking

We are called to love those present enough to listen to what they have to say and to speak what is worth their hearing.

Announcements

2018-068

For the Friends for Racial Justice (FORJ) Committee, Betsy Roper reminded Friends of the vibrant and inspiring **FEMS Poetry Slam** competition on Saturday, October 20 and Sunday, October 21. As the sponsoring committee, FORJ needs to staff the Meetinghouse with volunteers to take two-hour paired shifts to welcome our guests and direct them to the bathroom or the kitchen, or to call the Facilities Manager if something serious were to occur. Volunteers can sign up on the FMC Community Website or on the clipboard in the Friends Center. Betsy reminded Friends that FEMS will be converting the restrooms to gender-neutral for the two days of the event. There will still, of course, be the single stall restroom on each floor.

For the *ad hoc* **Financial Priorities Group** (with members Ariel Maddocks, Susan Davies, Rick Talkov, Lorena Boswell (consultant), Lili Schwan-Rosenwald, Ian Harrington, Jan Nisenbaum, Joseph Tierney, Jane Jackson (consultant), and Alasdair Post-Quinn), Jan Nisenbaum announced **threshing sessions** on Sunday, October 28 from 1:15 to 3:00 pm, and on Saturday, November 3 from 1:15 to 3:15 pm, the purpose of which is to give community members an opportunity to think about and discuss our care of our physical/financial resources in the face of persistent budget deficits.

Co-Presiding Clerk Ian Harrington announced that **Salem Quarterly Meeting** will meet at South Shore Preparative Meeting (which is under the care of FMC) in Pembroke on October 28. Worship will be at 10:00 am, lunch at 11:30, conversation at 12:30, business at 2:00.

Co-Presiding Clerk Ian Harrington announced that Pat Wild, the mother of our member Patricia Wild, died on Thursday, October 11. Friends held Patricia and her family in the Light.

Ministry and Counsel: Special Meetings for Worship

2018-069

Gail Rogers, Co-Clerk of Ministry and Counsel, announced that the Committee has appointed the following Meetings for Worship:

The primary Meeting for Worship on October 21, 2018, will be outside of Raytheon in Cambridge from 11:00 am until noon. Ministry and Counsel has now appointed these Meetings for Worship on an ongoing basis on the 3rd First Day in October unless otherwise decided and announced. The Meetinghouse will remain open for Meeting for Worship for those not attending the All-Meeting Meeting for Worship at Raytheon.

Meeting for Worship will take place on Thanksgiving and Christmas from 10:30 to 11:30 am and on New Year's Eve from 11:00 pm until midnight. These holiday Meetings for Worship have also been appointed in perpetuity unless otherwise decided and announced.

New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) Sessions Reports

2018-070

Cornelia Parkes, Ben Warner (in absentia), and Ian Harrington reported on their experience at NEYM sessions this past August.

Cornelia reported that the week of sessions was a wonderful experience of spiritual immersion and love. Serving on Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel, she spent a lot of time listening to individuals one-on-one and in meetings. She took good care of herself, exercising and resting, an important thing to do at Sessions. She mentioned the carbon calculator that will be made available to everyone on the Yearly Meeting website; Yearly Meeting Business Meeting urged that every Friend and every Monthly Meeting commit to decrease their carbon footprint by 10% by December 2019. Business Meeting approved Salem Quarter's proposed minute supporting prison reform. Cornelia told us that, just like FMC, NEYM is also considering its financial priorities. They intended to balance the Yearly Meeting budget, but concerns about cuts were strongly expressed by a number of Friends, which caused them to roll back planned reductions in spending. In previous years, racism and White Privilege were often a focus of meetings at Yearly Meeting Sessions; that was again true this year, and those concerns permeated everything that the Yearly Meeting did. Greg Williams, despite very serious health concerns, showed a video (available on the NEYM website) that seems to Cornelia to be saying that if you are White, then you are part of systemic racism, without exception.

Ben Warner unfortunately could not make this meeting, so Tom Sander read his report, which was a reflective philosophical essay calling for Friends to be true to their calling and their history.

Ian Harrington reported on Diane Randall's Bible Half-Hours, which he found very moving. He seconded Cornelia's observations about the carbon calculator. The nomination of a white man in his seventies as rising Clerk led to objections from Friends wishing to have a nominee from some other demographic group; there was tension. Two actions were taken as a response: the Meeting decided to form a group to observe the actions of the Yearly Meeting and to draw attention to any instance that smacked of White Supremacy; and to review the responsibilities and procedures for the Clerk and other leadership positions to see how they can be changed to make it possible for non-wealthy people to fill these positions (a number of Friends considered for Clerk were not white or wealthy but needed to decline because of the unpaid demands of time that would be entailed). When these procedures were approved, tensions seemed to be relieved.

A Friend pointed out that we had hoped to hear from younger Friends today to give us their perspectives on Sessions, but they were unable to come; Elizabeth Claggett-Borne is working with them and we hope they will get a chance to present at a Forum or on another occasion.

Another Friend said that the conflict at Business Meetings during Yearly Meeting Sessions was very fruitful; Friends worked through each of the threads of disagreement and pain. There seemed to be enough time and this Friend was quite inspired by the success of Quaker process in this instance.

Beneficial Cycle Coordinating Group (BCCG) Report

2018-071

Barbara Scott Nelson brought back to Meeting for Business in Worship BCCG's three specific recommendations considered at the September 9 Meeting for Business in Worship. The recommendations, with some added details, were:

Recommendation 1: Eliminate the Beneficial Cycle categories from all future operating budgets (from fiscal year 2020 on).

Recommendation 2: Provide two funds in this year's and future budgets—one for inreach/outreach projects undertaken by the Resident Friend (\$2000), and the other for projects proposed by committees, working groups, and interest groups and approved by the Meeting for Business in Worship (\$3500).

Barbara pointed out that the Meeting already approved these two funds for the Fiscal Year 2019 budget. The BCCG recommends the following process in developing proposals from committees and groups:

- As part of their seasoning and discernment process, committees, working groups or interest groups with a project idea should use the grant application form (which explicitly asks about how the project will increase vitality at FMC) that has been used by the BCCG and can be found on the Meeting website (<https://community.fmcquaker.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Protocol-for-BCCG-Grant-Proposals-V6a.pdf>). The committee or group can request assistance as needed. Lorena or her designee (perhaps a former member of the BCCG) can consult.
- The committee or group should then ask the Presiding Co-Clerks to put their proposal on the agenda, present it to the Meeting, and request approval.

Recommendation 3: Incorporate into regular Meeting activities the parts of the Beneficial Cycle we want to keep and lay down the experiment and the BCCG, which has been administering it. The BCCG urges Meeting to maintain in the future its present awareness of the

Beneficial Cycle by doing some or all of the following: consider allowing time during Meetings for Business in Worship to identify new examples of vitality in the Meeting; use Committee Clerks' Meetings to develop and solidify the role of all Meeting committees and working groups in promoting vitality; as part of committee check-ins, include a time for sharing "stirrings of vitality" and areas of concern that group members have experienced; as committees make decisions and do business, make it a regular practice to ask how the work connects to the Beneficial Cycle and Meeting vitality; include in annual reports the ways in which the committee has seen itself contributing to the Beneficial Cycle and Meeting vitality; when submitting descriptions of events and meetings to the database for our publications, include connections to the Beneficial Cycle.

In discussion, Friends commented:

We need to make sure that quantitative analysis be done to assess the success of projects that are proposed and approved.

The outreach part of the Beneficial Cycle experiment was not done thoroughly enough; outreach is relatively hard and expensive. We are smaller than we were five years ago, or at least we have not grown significantly. An important remaining question is, "how do we bring in a sufficient number of younger people to keep the Meeting sustainable in the long run?" We need to stay open to spending what is needed on outreach, even as the BC experiment is ended.

The vitality problem cannot be solved by throwing money at it; at the heart of what is needed is deeply vital spirituality.

The committee's report is enthusiastic and yet cautious. How do we keep the work going?

Friends added **Recommendation 4**: the Meeting will review our Beneficial Cycle practices in a year to see how they have affected growth and vitality in the Meeting.

Friends approved the four recommendations.

Attendance Data Collection

2018-072

(Deborah Colgan clerked this item.) Ian Harrington, Co-Presiding Clerk, reminded Friends that the group planning the Threshing Sessions in the spring became aware of the lack of adequate data on attendance at many Meeting events, data that is essential in evaluating our efforts to increase vitality. The planning group, along with the Presiding Clerks, urge, therefore, that groups and committees that sponsor events/programs/workshops/lunch send the Clerks Team an estimate of how many people attended.

A Friend commented that this will involve a lot of numbers, which could be a burden on the Clerks; perhaps an online survey could be set up. Debby answered that the Clerks, along with the Resident Friend, will work out the details of how to handle the data.

A suggestion was made to use press releases to increase attendance to events open to outside groups.

Peace and Social Concerns Report

2018-073

John Bach reported for the Peace and Social Concerns Committee that the numbers at the October All-Meeting Meeting for Worship at Raytheon (formerly at Textron) have been going down over the years, but during the other 11 months, attendance has been increasing at the monthly small-group worship, partly because of outside groups joining in. He noted that we get

credit as Quakers for large attendance of outside groups at events at FMC and visibly sponsored by FMC groups.

John mentioned the secular anti-war group stand-out at Raytheon this coming Tuesday, October 16, from 5:00 to 6:00 pm.

He also offered to tell interested Friends about a new campaign at Hanscom Air Force Base.

Treasurer's Report

2018-074

Jane Jackson, Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Report for the Fiscal Year that ended on June 30, 2018. Compared to Fiscal Year 2017, our assets (if investments are considered to have their book value) are lower by about \$132,000. The decrease is because we had to sell some of our investments to pay our bills.

Our investments are recorded in our books at cost value, about \$937,000. The actual market value of our investments on June 30, 2018, was about \$1,403,000. This is a decrease by about \$90,000 from the June 30, 2017 market value.

We made our goal for contributions last year, and donations from outside sources in honor of our members pushed us over the goal. Total income was slightly over budget and total expenses slightly under budget, which left us with a deficit of \$195,277, about what we had budgeted.

Jane welcomes questions sent to her at treasurer@fmcquaker.org. If requested, she will set a time for conversation about the financial reports after folks have had a chance to study them.

Jane will come back next month for final approval of her report.

The Meeting for Business in Worship adjourned at 3:36 pm, with Friends purposing next to gather in a Meeting for Business in Worship on Sunday, November 11, at 1:15 pm in the Meetinghouse.

Ian Harrington, Co-Presiding Clerk

David L Myers, Recording Clerk

Memorial Meetings Committee

Report for 2017 and 2018

Since the Memorial Committee last submitted a report (June, 2016), the following memorials have been held "in reverent simplicity."

Bob Seeley: December 22, 2016

Andrew Linn: January 27, 2017

Pattie Derr: March 11, 2017

Joanie Griscom: April 8, 2017

Bruce Thatcher*: November 11, 2017

Jonathan Fine: March 3, 2018

Joan Borowitz: June 4, 2018

*Bruce, a New Hampshire resident, was not a regular attender of FMC. He and his first wife had been married in our meetinghouse and had asked for his memorial to be held here.

In addition, on June 10, 2017, and May 12 of this year, the Memorial Meetings Committee offered a group memorial for those of our community who had recently lost someone and wished to honor that person's life in the manner of Friends. Several members of the FMC community chose to participate in these group memorials, held under the care of a member of Ministry and Counsel. Those so moved spoke out of the silence to share reflections, memories and stories. Others, unable to attend, requested that a particular name be held in the Light. Unlike most memorials, when the FMC community generously supplies "sweet and savory finger foods," the members of the Memorial Meetings Committee assumed responsibility for the reception that followed.

Serving on this Committee, whose "committee meetings" often happen in the FMC kitchen as we prepare food or load the dishwasher, is a very special form of witness. To support the members of a grieving family reminds us of what matters. A memorial meeting held in the manner of Friends is often an opportunity to do outreach with memorial attendees who have never before attended a Quaker meeting; we appreciate the opportunity to answer their questions. To attend the memorial for someone we had not known well allows us to deepen our appreciation for members of this community. And we are so moved to receive thank-you notes like this: "Dear Cambridge Friends, I can't thank you enough for everything you have done for our family. Through my father's last weeks, you took us into your community and treated us as family. . . . And giving us a way to share the amazing and many truths of my father's life at a memorial service no one will ever forget. . . . Your kindnesses are a great example to us and will be passed on. Warmly, Annie [Fine, Jonathan Fine's daughter.]"

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To receive newsletter write to:
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Friends Meeting at Cambridge

Return Service Requested

Meetings for Worship at FMC

5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge

Sundays 10:30 am
5:00 pm
Wednesdays 8:30 am to 10 am

South Shore Preparative Meeting

155 Washington St. (Rt. 53), Pembroke
Sundays 10:00 am
Joanne Heffernan
781-337-9337

Worship Group at Brookhaven

1010 Waltham Street, Lexington
Sundays 10:30 am
Elisabeth Cotten
781-862-7578

Other Nearby Worship Opportunities

Acton Friends Meeting,

Contact Clerk, acton@neym.org

Amesbury Monthly Meeting, 120 Friend St., Amesbury

Sundays 10:00 am

Beacon Hill Friends Meeting, 6 Chestnut St., Boston

Sundays 10:30 am

Cambridge Friends School, 5 Cadbury Rd., Cambridge

Tuesdays 8:30 to 9:00 am

Framingham Friends Meeting, 841 Edmands Rd., Framingham

Sundays 10:00 am

Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting, CFS Cambridge

Sundays 10:00 am

Lawrence Monthly Meeting, 15 Forest St., Methuen

Sundays 6:30 pm

Nashoba Worship Group, nashobaquakers@gmail.com

Sundays 10:30 am

North Shore Monthly Meeting, 74 Hart St., Beverly Farms

Sundays 10:00 am

Wellesley Friends Meeting, 26 Benvenue St., Wellesley

Sundays 10:30 am