



Minutes & Reports

Friends Meeting at Cambridge

December 2018

Meeting for Business in Worship

November 11, 2018

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Friends Meeting at Cambridge (FMC) gathered in a Meeting for Business in Worship on Sunday, November 11, at 1:15pm. The Meeting was convened by Deborah Colgan, Co-Presiding Clerk, after a period of silent worship, with 53 people present. The Clerk opened the Meeting by reading from George Fox on the Peace testimony, in *New England Faith and Practice, 1985*.

We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretence whatsoever. And this is our testimony to the whole world. The spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight any war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world.

A second reading was from *Pendle Hill Pamphlet 444: The Gathered Meeting* by Steven Davison, pages 24 & 25.

The Business Meeting is a Meeting for Worship. This is the most important principle of all. . . .

We all are clerks. It would be better yet if all members of the worshipping body acted inwardly as though they, too, were clerking the meeting. Not that we should critique the clerk's work, but that we should, like the clerk, pay closest attention to the movement of the Spirit in the meeting and seek ways, inwardly through prayer and, when prompted, outwardly in vocal ministry, to help lead the community into Truth and unity of spirit. . . .

Announcements

2018-075

The **Middle School from Cambridge Friends School** will have Meeting for Worship on Tuesday, November 20, from 9:00 to 9:30 am in the Meetinghouse. FMC Friends are invited to participate.

The **Mennonite Congregation of Boston** has scheduled a worship service on Sunday, December 16, at 5:00 pm in the Meetinghouse. The event will be a trial run that may lead to a proposal to Meeting for Business in Worship to rent our space every Sunday evening starting next summer.

Lorena Boswell, Resident Friend, announced an expanded **guest room policy** that forbids the use of marijuana (alcohol use was already forbidden) on the premises.

Jane Jackson, convener of the LGBTQ+ Working Group, announced that there will be a memorial meeting in observance of the **Transgender Day of Remembrance** on Sunday, November 18 at 1:00 pm in the Meetinghouse. The Transgender Day of Remembrance was established in 1999 to remember those who have lost their lives due to violence against transgender people in the past year. The large majority of these victims are transgender women of color.

Sara Sue Pennell announced the **MAAP tag sale fundraiser** Friday, November 16, from 5:30 pm–8:00 pm and Saturday, November 17, from 9:00 am–2:00 pm.

Polly Attwood announced that **Friends General Conference (FGC)** has carried out an **Institutional Assessment on Systemic Racism**. The Central Committee has resolved that in all FGC decision-making processes during fiscal year 2019, each body shall answer the following query with respect to each decision, "How does this decision support FGC in its goal to transform into an actively anti-racist faith community?" FGC commits to work to eliminate white supremacy within the Religious Society of Friends and model anti-racism. In order to be inclusive of non-European cultures, they aim to develop a means to examine and change Quaker traditions, language and process. Read a summary of the report at
<https://www.fgcquaker.org/news/october-report-institutional-assessment-racism-task-force-recommendations-fgc-central-committee>

The full report can be found at

https://www.fgcquaker.org/sites/default/files/attachments/IA%20Task%20Force%20report%20-%20final.pdf?utm_source=FGC+E-Newsletters&utm_campaign=b971e00e5c-COMM_Vital_Friends_Sept_2018_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_834ba22447-b971e00e5c-288726213&goal=0_834ba22447-b971e00e5c-288726213&mc_cid=b971e00e5c&mc_eid=d9a15af73f&fbclid=IwAR3Xg2HnJx9n0OA2Z_9r1hmLEH2rpv1ewnuXcAWgQ3k8WBH-avWYn5c-sJg

Letter for Christel Jorgenson

2018-076

Deborah Colgan, Co-Presiding Clerk, read a letter of introduction for Christel Jorgensen as she travels among Friends in New Zealand. Friends approved enthusiastically.

Financial Report - 2nd Reading and Revised Budget for 2019

2018-077

Jane Jackson, Treasurer, presented the Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2018 for a second reading.

Compared to Fiscal Year 2017, our assets 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 from the June 30, 2017 market value by about \$90,000.

We made our goal for contributions this year; 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 emphasized that this size of deficit cannot continue year after year. Jane welcomes questions and suggestions.

Friends accepted the report with gratitude for Jane's work for the Meeting.

Jane also presented a revised budget for Fiscal Year 2019. She noted that the difference from the budget approved in the spring is that the Beneficial Cycle amount of \$107,100 has been adjusted to a realistic budget amount of \$12,958, which includes \$7,458 for amounts obligated for previously approved Beneficial Cycle grants, \$2,000 for Resident Friend discretionary inreach and outreach, and \$3,500 for committee special projects. The projected net deficit is about \$172,000 instead of the previously approved net deficit of about \$258,000.

A Friend expressed her deep concern about approving this budget with a large deficit which she felt was unwise.

Friends approved this change in the budget.

Nominating Committee Re: Assistant Clerk Nomination

2018-078

Jim Hannon, Co-Clerk of Nominating Committee, announced that the Committee's efforts to find an Assistant Clerk have not been successful. He explained that the Assistant Clerk is to become a Co-Clerk after spending a year in the Assistant Clerk position. Jim asked Friends to consider stepping up to fill this important role. Nominating Committee and the Clerks Team are available for conversation about the position.

Jim asked Friends interested in committee work to approach him or other members of the Nominating Committee.

Memorial Meetings Committee Annual Report

2018-079

Sarah Sue Pennell presented a report from Memorial Meetings Committee covering the period from June 2016 through June 2018. She described the lovely experience of the Committee when they help families at a painful and stressful time. They carried out seven memorial meetings in that period (for Joan Borowitz, Pattie Derr, Jonathan Fine, Joanie Griscom, Andrew Linn, Bob Seeley, and Bruce Thatcher).

The Committee has been operating as a collective, without a clerk, and that has been working well so far.

The Meeting held the Committee in the Light and accepted the report with gratitude for the heartfelt work that they do.

Ad Hoc Group on Witness and Inclusion (formerly, Ad Hoc Signs Committee)

2018-080

After a period of silent worship, Polly Attwood presented for the *Ad Hoc Group on Witness and Inclusion* (Polly Attwood, Elizabeth Dyer, Betsy Fox, Jo Ellen Hillyer, Betsy Roper, Kitty Rush, Mary Spitzer, and Rick Talkov). Meeting held these individuals in the Light for their hard work.

In a background report, Polly noted that, in response to violence and oppression aimed at Black, Brown, and LGBTQ+ communities, individuals from Friends for Racial Justice, LGBTQ+, and Peace and Social Concerns came together to explore ideas for how FMC might best display

permanent ongoing public messages of witness and inclusion. In December 2016, Meeting for Business in Worship approved placing a Black Lives Matter sign and a Pride Flag sign on the FMC lawn facing Longfellow Park. As a result of the disappearance of the Pride Flag sign on two different occasions, Meeting for Business in Worship approved replacing the lawn flag with the current Philadelphia Pride Flag (which includes a brown and black stripe to explicitly include Black and Brown members of that community) and a Trans Flag hanging high on the outside of the Friends Center.

In March 2018, the *Ad Hoc* group, together with the Clerks, brought to Meeting for Business in Worship the idea of a simple lightweight and sturdy hanging display holder on the Longfellow Park side of the Friends Center building in addition to the existing flags. The idea was to offer a design that allows messages to be changed easily at regular intervals. Perhaps different Meeting committees could decide on appropriate messages, or possibly, after an initial display of Quaker testimonies, a particular group would be led to decide on further messages.

Polly brought the *Ad Hoc* Group's request to be laid down. Furthermore, they propose the following minute:

FMC is committed to display the LGBTQ+ and Trans flags as they currently hang on the FMC Friends Center, and the Black Lives Matter yard sign on the front lawn facing Longfellow Park.

After a deep discussion (notes of which appear in a separate document in the December 2018 edition of *Minutes & Reports*), Friends approved laying down the *Ad Hoc* Group on Witness and Inclusion and also approved the proposed minute to continue with our present display of sign and flags.

It was decided that the question of who would lead the Meeting in going forward on a more permanent display of witness and inclusion would be deferred until a future Meeting for Business in Worship; perhaps some Friends will be interested in serving on a new *Ad Hoc* group, or a standing committee might take up this question.

The full text of the group's report is in the December 2018 edition of *Minutes & Reports*.

Friends for Racial Justice Committee Annual Report

2018-081

Nancy Frost, Clerk of Friends for Racial Justice (FORJ) Committee, presented the FORJ annual report. Friends held the Committee in the Light.

Nancy asked Friends to hold open December 2 at 1:15 pm, when they will present an interactive workshop on lowering barriers to inclusion: microaggressions with regard to race.

Nancy mentioned a number of events the Committee has presented, including a forum on January 14, 2018, in remembrance of Martin Luther King; the ongoing Stone of Hope Drumming Circle on Thursday evenings with Toussaint Liberator; the FEMS Poetry Tournament in October of both 2017 and 2018; Paula Palmer's carefully researched and sobering presentation on the history of Quaker Indian Boarding Schools on October 24, 2018; and participation by members of the Committee in the racial justice work of the wider community of Friends, including the Friends General Conference (FGC) institutional assessment and leadership of workshops at FGC and New England Yearly Meeting.

FORJ sees its role in the Meeting as facilitating, encouraging and supporting the efforts of the full Meeting to live into our calling to truly become the beloved community, lovingly and

firmly grappling with the institutional racism that besets us all. We warmly welcome others to join us in this work.

Friends accepted the report with gratitude. Full text of the report will be published in the December 2018 edition of *Minutes & Reports*.

Peace and Social Concerns (P&SC) Committee Annual Report

2018-082

Ray Aucoin, Clerk of Peace and Social Concerns Committee, presented their annual report. We held the members of the Committee in the Light. Ray mentioned that the Committee always has room for more members.

The Committee strives to represent both the will and intentions of the Meeting and the promotion of Quaker values inherent in their ongoing work.

Ray described a number of activities they arranged over the last year (described in detail in the full text of the report to be published in the December 2018 edition of *Minutes & Reports*).

The Committee learned much from comment cards filled out last year on Friends' personal level of witness and activism within the areas of peace and social justice. This year, Ray asked Friends to write down one or two areas of social justice they would like the Meeting to take action on. P&SC hopes to be the instrument for change that the wider Meeting wishes to see.

A Friend suggested that we need a focus for our activism and energy—a unifying query.

The Meeting for Business in Worship adjourned at 3:39 pm, with Friends purposing next to gather in a Meeting for Business in Worship on Sunday, December 9, at 1:15 pm in the Meetinghouse.

Deborah Colgan, Co-Presiding Clerk

David L Myers, Recording Clerk

Discussion of Displays on Our Buildings

The following comments were made during the discussion:

- Let's schedule a review to look at this after some considerable period of time to see how we have experienced the signs and flags now being displayed.
 - We have lived with the sign for two years and the flags for one year; we already have considerable experience with them.
 - We have a temporary solution, but we need to work toward a more permanent one.
 - Meeting should consider next discernment steps using a new *ad hoc* group that can recommend a review of our experience and any new sign on the Friends Center facing Longfellow Park. This would entail Friends stepping forward to serve on such a group. Is there energy for this?
 - The signs are important, but could the energy spent on them be employed in a way that would have more impact?
 - Do we need an *ad hoc* group; can't we ask a standing committee to take this on?
-

Report of Ad Hoc Group on Witness and Inclusion

Members of Ad Hoc Group on Witness and Inclusion—Jo Ellen Hillyer and Rick Talkov from Trustees were instrumental in calling together the initial group; the ongoing group has been: Polly Attwood, Elizabeth Dyer, Betsy Fox, Betsy Roper, Kitty Rush, and Mary Spitzer.

Members of Friends for Racial Justice (FORJ) Committee, the LGBTQ+ Working Group, Peace & Social Concerns (P&SC) Committee and many others across FMC have been carrying a heartfelt concern for the violent deaths of young people, especially those from the Black, Brown and LGBTQ+ communities. Rooted in a long history of anti-Black and anti-gay oppression, this violence is not new but is more visible, facilitated by easy access to guns, and riddled with deep implicit bias coupled with institutional racism, homophobia, transphobia and xenophobia.

Moreover, FMC has been asking, what more can this Meeting do to live into a ministry of wider inclusion and full welcome so that we are a Meeting where all can experience belonging?

In this context, in the fall of 2016 FORJ and the LGBTQ+ Working Group responded to a sense of Spirit's call to express support for Black, Brown and Queer communities facing recurring violence and longtime oppression. In December, Meeting for Business in Worship approved placing Black Lives Matter and Pride Flag yard signs on the FMC lawn facing Longfellow Park.

As Spirit continued to move among us, in early fall 2017 Trustees Committee created a representative from FORJ, LGBTQ+ Working Group, and P&SC to explore ideas and directions for FMC to display permanent ongoing public messages of witness and inclusion. In October, the LGBTQ+ Pride flag disappeared twice. Concerned that this was an act of homophobia & transphobia, FMC Meeting for Business in Worship approved a minute (see below) that led to the current Philadelphia Pride Flag (which includes a brown and black stripe to explicitly include Black and Brown members of that community) and Trans Flag hanging high on the outside of the Friends Center.

Minute 2017-104: Polly Attwood, Clerk of the Ad Hoc Signs Committee, presented a request for the Meeting to approve displaying an LGBTQ+ banner as a response to the theft of two rainbow signs recently and as a stand-in until we find unity on, and implement, a more permanent way of reflecting the various messages of welcome and witness we as a Meeting stand behind and are living into.

Friends expressed their support for the idea and noted that perhaps the sign could also be used at public events such as marches in the future. Friends approved that the Ad Hoc Signs Committee, in consultation with Trustees Committee, should hang such a flag. Friends held the group and their work in the Light.

Through winter and spring 2018, the *Ad Hoc Group on Witness and Inclusion* engaged the Meeting in exploring formats and content for public messages of witness and inclusion.

All along the *Ad Hoc* group has understood that any messages Meeting becomes clear to display face both outward and inward. They are not endpoints but beginnings that invite all at FMC to live continuously our peace and justice testimonies and our desire to be a welcoming community to all.

In March 2018, the *Ad Hoc* group together with the Clerks raised the idea of a simple lightweight and sturdy hanging display holder on the side of the Friends Center building and

facing Longfellow Park. Initial discussion with Betsy Hewitt and John Bach indicated that such a hanging folder could be created, but more research was needed to take this next step.

- This holder was intended not to replace but to augment the hanging Philadelphia Pride and Trans flags.
- The idea was to offer a design that would allow messages to be easily changed at regular intervals (e.g., every 3, 4, or 6 months) and that different Meeting committees discern together (without needing to return to Meeting for Business in Worship for approval) messages consistent with Quaker and FMC values and informed by that committee's particular concerns and visions.
- Initially, the *Ad Hoc* group brought this idea to the three social witness committees [FORJ, P&SC and CQEWS (Cambridge Quaker Earthcare Witness)] and LGBTQ+. All four groups expressed interest in this experiment; some concerns also arose.
- Another idea was to have the first hanging display the Quaker testimonies and then see whether any committee or Meeting as whole was led to explore using it for additional messages.

Between spring 2018 and today, no focused energy has arisen within the *Ad Hoc* group, the witness committees, or the wider Meeting to move any of the above forward.

When the *Ad Hoc* group and Clerks gathered in October, we found unity around:

- a sense that the Meeting embraces the LGBTQ+ Philadelphia Pride and Trans flags as FMC's public expression of living faithfully into LGBTQ+ inclusion and witness;
- a sense that the Meeting embraces the Black Lives Matter yard sign that steadily, if quietly and less visible from a distance, reflects FMC's continuing commitment to living into racial justice and healing;
- the hanging folder as a viable and meaningful way to display FMC's witness, possibly beginning with the testimonies; and
- our internal clarity that the *Ad Hoc* Group on Witness and Inclusion as currently constituted should be laid down. As we do so, we bring the following request and questions to the Meeting.

Request and Questions

1. We request that the current *Ad Hoc* Group on Witness and Inclusion be laid down.
2. We recommend that the FMC Meeting for Business in Worship minute the following:
 - FMC's continuing commitment to display the Philadelphia LGBTQ+ Pride and Trans flags as they currently hang on the FMC Friends Center and the Black Lives Matter yard sign on the front lawn facing Longfellow Park. (Note: the Philadelphia LGBTQ+ Pride flag includes a brown and black stripe to explicitly include Black and Brown members of that community.)
3. We ask the Meeting to consider these two questions as part of discerning possible next steps:
 - Is there energy and leading for a new or renewed group to take forward the idea of a hanging display holder with rotating messages under the care of committees and possibly other clearly identified interest groups?
 - Is there energy or leading among a new or renewed group to explore another format for a prominent visible display of the Quaker testimonies?

Friends for Racial Justice Committee Annual Report

The Friends for Racial Justice (FORJ) Committee aims to bring ourselves and the Meeting community to a deeper understanding of our participation in a culture in which white people benefit from unearned privileges by virtue of their skin color. We seek to recognize and acknowledge racial injustice in ourselves, our Meeting community, and the larger society in which we are embedded. Our goal is to support the deeply spiritual work of dismantling racism and living into Friends' testimony of equality.

Over the past year the Committee has worked to achieve these goals in several ways:

- On January 14, in remembrance of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Cornelia Parkes gave a forum, "Engaging Racism," on institutional racism using material from Walter Wink's *Engaging the Powers*. She urged us to become faithful followers and friends of Jesus and to exercise non-violence in working to overcome racism.
- FORJ co-sponsors Stone of Hope Drumming on Thursday evenings with Toussaint Liberator, a treasured opportunity to learn and deepen through music and discussions of race.
- In October 2017 and again in October 2018, FORJ hosted the F.E.M.S. Poetry Tournament. This event, led by Zenaida Peterson, a 2017 Quaker Voluntary Service Fellow, offers feminine voices an opportunity to speak their truth through poetry. It also offers FMC members an opportunity to listen to and witness the expression of lives often silenced in the broader community.
- On October 24, FORJ hosted Paula Palmer's carefully researched and sobering presentation on the history of Quaker Indian Boarding Schools, "Facing Our History and Ourselves." Paula challenged us to humbly learn about our past and to use that knowledge as a springboard for becoming committed and effective allies of the Native Americans who have endured the theft of land and the attempted theft of language and culture, including the Massachusetts people on whose land our Meetinghouse sits.
- Members of FORJ participate in the racial justice work of the wider community of Friends including the FGC institutional assessment and leadership of workshops at Friends General Conference and New England Yearly Meeting.

FORJ sees its role in the Meeting as facilitating, encouraging and supporting the efforts of the full Meeting to live into our calling to truly become the beloved community, lovingly and firmly grappling with the institutional racism that besets us all. We warmly welcome others to join us in this work.

Peace and Social Concerns Committee Annual Report

Our current committee membership includes Raymond Aucoin (Clerk), Jane Alexander, John Bach, Michael Carey, Suzanne Cooper, Ghanda DiFiglia, Peter Durigon, Homer Franck, Don Gianniny, Skip Schiel, Kim West, and Will Watson. We would also like to continue to warmly invite anybody from the Meeting community who shares our concern for peace and social justice to attend any of our monthly committee meetings whenever they feel led.

As one of Friends Meeting at Cambridge's witness committees, the Committee on Peace and Social Concerns continues to strive to represent both the will and intentions of the Meeting and the promotion of Quaker values inherent in our ongoing work. It is our earnest hope and desire that the Committee might act as a kind of dowsing rod, guiding the members and attenders of Friends Meeting at Cambridge with knowledge and opportunities for promoting peace and social justice within our community and the wider world.

Over the past year, we have endeavored to achieve these lofty goals by providing various witness opportunities for the Meeting, including the monthly Meeting for Worship at the BBN/Raytheon campus in Cambridge, and especially this year's annual All-Meeting for Worship which enjoyed a healthy and hearty representation from many members and attenders, to the annual Good Friday Peace Vigil held on the Boston Common. We continue to seek out and provide relevant speakers for both afternoon and morning forum programming, including the well-attended program by noted Israeli historian and social activist Ilan Pappé. We continue to actively collaborate with the greater Boston peace and social justice community through the co-sponsoring of various events that promote our shared ideals such as the annual United Nations International Day of Peace celebration on the Boston Common and the recent concert given by singer/song writer and social activist Tom Neilson.

This is some of what we have done this past year, but the real question is what more can we do?

Last year, the Committee asked you to consider several queries related to your personal level of witness and activism within the areas of peace and social justice. I am happy to report that we learned a great deal from those comment cards and have tried to use the information to help shape all that we have tried to accomplish this past year. Thank you Friends for your continued assistance, advice, and support.

This year, we come with a different yet parallel request. We know that many of you are deeply committed to the change you believe is needed in our world, perhaps even more now than ever. To that end, we are asking you to write down one or two areas of peace and social justice that you are involved in or would like to see the Meeting take a stance on. This can mean anything at all and I would encourage you to present any ideas you might have regardless of how small you may think they are. We, the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, hope to be the instruments for change that you, the wider Meeting, wish to see. I would like to conclude this year's annual report with this famous quote for your ongoing consideration and inspiration:

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good [people] do nothing."

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Friends Meeting at Cambridge

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To receive newsletter write to:
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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