

**New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends  
Permanent Board Minutes  
July 9, 2011  
New England Friends Home – Hingham, MA**

**11-52 Opening Worship:** We opened in waiting worship.

**11-53 Roll Call:** The Recording Clerk called the roll.

**Present:** Edward Baker, Holly Baldwin, Aimee Belanger, Sarah Gant, Ben Guaraldi, John Humphries, Sandy Isaacs, Allan Kohrman, Christopher McCandless, Sarah Sue Pennell, Suzanna Schell, Patricia Shotwell, Carolyn Stone, Donn Weinholtz

**Regrets:** Jennifer Baily (Personnel Committee Clerk), Debbie Block, Eileen Cummings (Finance Committee co-Clerk), Susan Davies, Jeremiah Dickinson, Eric Hill Edwards, Beth Gorton, Galen Hamann, Jan Hoffman, Mary Knowlton, Rebecca Leuchak, Dwight Lopes, Donald Mick, Karen Sanchez-Eppler, Philip Stone, Ruah Swennerfelt, Jane Van LANDINGHAM, Carl Williams, Rosemary Zimmermann

**Ex-Officio:** Travis Belcher (Finance Committee co-Clerk), Linda Jenkins (YM Presiding Clerk), Ed Mair (Treasurer), Jonathan Vogel-Borne (YM Secretary)

**Guests:** Warren Atkinson, John Bach, David Baxter, Bill Churchill, Chris Doehlert, Paul Hood, Betsy Kantt, Alda Kirsis, Anne Kriebel, Ted Moore, Alice Schaefer, Dinah Starr, Dody Waring

**11-54 New England Friends Home:** Permanent Board gathered on this day for a special called meeting in order to receive the recommendation of the New England Friends Home Committee that the Yearly Meeting should cease its operation of the Friends Home and to discern appropriate means for the Yearly Meeting to proceed. The realities of the situation were such that waiting until August to meet would add to the financial burden and potential liability.

We reviewed the report from the Ad Hoc New England Friends Home Care Committee, in which the Care Committee fully supported the following recommendation of the Friends Home Committee:

The Home Committee finds unity in the reality that New England Friends Home cannot continue in its current form. Further, it is the sense of the Home Committee that New England Yearly Meeting lacks the expertise to effectively oversee the running of an assisted living facility given all of the regulatory issues. The committee is recommending to New England Yearly Meeting to cease its operation of the Friends Home and to find an appropriate way to disengage. (Minutes of the NE Friends Home Committee, 20 June 2011)

After hearing reports from members of the Home Committee and engaging in lengthy discussion about various details and options, including realities concerning constraints due to size of facility, market and location, and inability to pay sufficient salary to hire and keep professional staff, Friends united with the Friends Home Committee's recommendation. **Friends approved**, with deep regret, laying down this ministry of elder care and agreed to initiate proceedings

to cease operation of the Friends Home as quickly as can be accomplished with grace and care.

Friends authorized the Home Committee to take necessary steps, including the hiring of the Atlantic Retirement Group and interim staff, to carry out the orderly and timely closure of the facility. We trust that they will provide support for resident and staff transitions in a way that limits anxiety and disruption of services during the transition.

**11-55 Disposing of the New England Friends Home Committee property:** Friends discussed the need to move expeditiously to plan for disposal of the property, once the operations of the assisted living facility have ceased, given the monthly costs associated with maintaining the property. **Friends approved** the creation of an ad hoc planning committee to work with consultants to develop alternatives for disposal of the property, including sale or lease.

We will ask Sessions to authorize PB to move decisively to implement the plan for the property, following recommendations from this planning committee. Such authorization would include entering into necessary legal contracts, on behalf of NEYM, to effect the decisions.

**11-56 Closing Worship:** We closed in waiting worship, planning to meet again on Saturday, August 6, 2011, at 9:30 AM at Bryant University in Smithfield, RI.

Edward Baker, Clerk  
John Humphries, Recording Clerk

**New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends**  
**Permanent Board Minutes draft**  
**May 14, 2011**  
**Concord Friends Meeting – Canterbury, NH**

**11-36 Opening Worship:** We opened in waiting worship.

**11-37 Roll Call:** The Recording Clerk called the roll.

**Present:** Edward Baker, Holly Baldwin, Susan Davies, Jeremiah Dickinson, Andrew Grannell, Dorothy Grannell, Ben Guaraldi, Jan Hoffman, John Humphries, Sandy Isaacs, Mary Knowlton, Allan Kohrman, Christopher McCandless, Suzanna Schell, Patricia Shotwell, Philip Stone, Jane Van Landingham, and Rosemary Zimmermann

**Regrets:** Jennifer Baily (Personnel Committee Clerk), Travis Belcher (Finance Committee co-Clerk), Debbie Block, Sarah Gant, Judy Goldberger, Beth Gorton, Galen Hamann, Linda Jenkins (YM Presiding Clerk), Rebecca Leuchak, Dwight Lopes, Karen Sanchez-Eppler, Carolyn Stone, Ruah Swennerfelt, Donn Weinholtz, and Carl Williams

**Ex-Officio:** Eileen Cummings (Finance Committee co-Clerk), Ed Mair (Treasurer), Jonathan Vogel-Borne (YM Secretary)

**11-38 Minutes** of 3/12/2011 were **approved** with corrections.

**11-39 Report from Coordinating and Advisory Committee:** Edward Baker reported on behalf of the Committee. He reported on the emerging plans for Sessions, including significant business items and highlights of other programming. He asked Friends to hold the YM Presiding Clerk in our prayers during this period of many transitions in her life.

**11-40 Responses from Monthly Meetings Regarding the Minute of Purpose:** The Clerk reviewed the responses received from Beacon Hill, Worcester and North Sandwich MMs to PB's request for consideration of the Minute of Purpose (see PB Minutes 09-92 and 11-05). Friends expressed appreciation for the Clerk's letter in response to the concerns raised by North Sandwich MM.

Recognizing that the Minute of Purpose continues to be providing a means for fruitful discussions within the YM, Friends recommended not bringing the Minute of Purpose forward for consideration at Sessions. However, Friends were also eager to continue pursuing an intentional process and suggested the possibility of having the Minute read near the beginning of Sessions and providing a structured opportunity during the week for interested Friends to gather and share their concerns. One Friend noted the need to distinguish between two different discussions: 1) the concept and desirability of having a Minute of Purpose, and 2) revising the language in the current Minute.

**11-41 Recommendations Regarding YM Governance Structure:** Jan Hoffman reported for the ad hoc committee created at the March meeting (PB Minute 11-24). Referring to the proposal provided in the advance documents, she reviewed some key points:

- The Committee intentionally separated out the things that should be described in a revised *Faith and Practice*, and therefore requiring approval by Sessions for inclusion in the revision, and those changes that would not need to be included in the revision.
- The terms “Representative Meeting” and “representative” have been included as “placeholders”, recognizing that the actual names will most likely emerge from lengthy discussion and discernment.
- Every Representative Meeting is a meeting of the YM.
- Every MM gets a copy of the agenda and the minutes, a practice that will help to strengthen their sense of connection with the YM.
- Because the gathering is open to anyone, there are three categories of participants: those appointed by YM Nominating Committee, those appointed as representatives by their MM, and individuals who feel led to participate in the business and life of the YM.
- There is a distinction between these gatherings for the conduct of business and a proposed “Day of Discernment,” during which no decisions are made. If we were to follow the practice of New York YM, the Day of Discernment might have two primary purposes: a) inviting Friends to report on how the Spirit is moving within their own MM, and b) listening for how the YM is being called.

The lengthy discussion that followed identified a wide range of questions, responses, ideas and concerns for further discernment:

- The new structure would replace Permanent Board with something that has a new name and an altered function and authority. It restructures the relationship between the YM and the MMs, providing more opportunities for MMs and individuals to be involved and to gather as a YM.
- The YM Nominating Committee would appoint people to 5-year terms, and while that would be the recommendation to MMs, each MM would be able to determine its own practice in appointing representatives. It was suggested that the YM Nominating Committee should be charged with appointing *at least* 15 people (3 in each year) but given the flexibility to appoint more if they discern a need.
- NEYM is the only YM within Friends General Conference with a structure that does not include a “continuing body” like a Representative Meeting. In NYYM, the Representative Meetings are well-attended and have helped to build a culture in which MMs and volunteers seem to have a greater sense of ownership and responsibility for the YM. Having more business accomplished during the year could make August Sessions’ schedule more spacious, allowing more opportunity for deep discernment.
- The ad hoc committee’s proposal calls for a clerk and a recording clerk for Representative Meeting, but in NYYM, the various clerks of the YM also preside at Representative Meeting.

- While the new structure might facilitate the changes we want, we would still need to be intentional about the work of building community and improving the sense of connectedness between MMs and the YM.
- After the Clerk read the current *Faith and Practice* description of PB and read a portion of the ad hoc committee's proposal with "Permanent Board" substituted for "Representative Meeting," Friends found that we agree that PB is not a committee, but we are not in unity on whether every meeting of PB is a meeting of the YM.
- PB is not a continuing body because the YM appoints it, and PB is accountable to the YM. Having MMs name representatives and inviting those voices into the discernment gives the new structure greater weight, along with a power of discernment that PB does not have.
- Would people not appointed by YM Nominating Committee actually show up?
- At least one Friend expressed concern that the new structure, establishing a body with expanded authority to make decisions for the YM, presents the risk that a relatively small number of people could make a momentous decision that is counter to the wishes of the larger body. Others encouraged us to trust in the wisdom of those who would feel called to this work and to trust that they would heed the guidance of the Spirit to hold decisions for the larger gathering when warranted – just as PB does now.

While Friends were unable to reach unity on this proposal, we agreed that we are ready to engage in a discussion of these ideas at Sessions, inviting the broader YM into our exploration of how the YM might achieve broader participation in the work of discernment and decision-making between Sessions. The Clerk will share the work we have already done within the framework of his report to Sessions, and he will invite others to participate in the creative process of envisioning what changes might be possible and in listening for how the Spirit is calling us.

**11-42 YM Secretary Report:** Jonathan Vogel-Borne, YM Secretary, reported on some of the key activities during what has been a very full couple of months:

Pastors' Retreat – Jonathan worked with NYYM General Secretary Christopher Sammond to organize and lead a joint gathering of pastors from the two YMs at Powell House. With the ongoing transitions in NEYM's pastoral meetings, the number of participants at the retreat was lower this year. They explored some of the pain that arises from the ambivalence about pastors, and much of the discussion centered on forgiveness and healing.

Vassalboro Quarter – Debbie Humphries (Hartford) is traveling in the ministry among the MMs of the Quarter this week. Her trip follows last fall's visit by Beth Collea (YM Christian Education Coordinator). The Quarter has recently pledged to support a student at Ramallah Friends School (\$2800/yr for 13 years).

Connecticut Valley Quarter – Some MMs have responded to a request from the Quarter and have increased their contributions to help reduce participant fees for a Fall gathering at Woolman Hill, with the hope of facilitating broad participation.

YM website – Jeff Hipp, NEYM Communications Director, provided oversight to the recent effort to gather information for designing a new website for NEYM. Chris Pifer of Friends General Conference staff is doing the design work, and the information gathering process has involved using the online community Craigslist to recruit six non-Quakers for a focus group to discuss the website, as well as outreach to smaller, isolated MMs within the YM.

Call to Witness/Day of Discernment – There were about 100 people at the Good Friday vigil. Steve Chase (Putney) and his wife, Katy Locke, led a session of Awakening the Dreamer at Beacon Hill Friends House that evening, with about 60 people participating. The Day of Discernment at Wellesley the following day involved 60-70 people and went very well until the last half hour, when an attempt to make decisions about next steps proved to be challenging.

Friends Camp – The capital campaign to pay for the new property has been successful; the loan from NEYM is almost paid off. However, the Camp's campaign seems to be affecting NEYM development efforts, and better coordination is needed.

Friends Home – The listening group created in March (see PB Minute 11-29) has begun its work. An outside trainer/facilitator is helping the Friends Home Committee address the question: "Should NEYM be in the assisted living business?"

Staffing – Jeff Hipp's mother is dying during this period when Jeff's work load is particularly heavy. Jonathan is seeking ways to be supportive and asked Friends to settle into a period of prayer for Jeff and his family. Allie Hersey, outgoing Accounts Manager, attended her last Finance Committee meeting last week. There is a good candidate for the Accounts Manager position, and there have been two inquiries about the archivist position. Jonathan will be leaving the YM Secretary position by December 31, 2012, and he is remaining open to what comes next. He is feeling called to reconciliation and healing work.

**11-43 Treasurer's Report:** Ed Mair, YM Treasurer, presented the year-to-date financial report (as of May 6, 2011). Compared to the previous year, individual contributions are down significantly, while MM contributions and income from retreat fees are up significantly. The increase in MM contributions may be a response to the "Funding Our Vision" gathering. Year-to-date expenses slightly exceed income, but that's expected at this point in the year.

**11-44 Finance Committee Report:** Eileen Cummings, co-Clerk of the Finance Committee, reported for the Committee. At their meeting on April 11, members had divergent positions on budget questions, but at last week's meeting, they were able to find unity on a balanced budget. The proposed budget funds all Level 1 priorities in the Priorities Process Budget without dipping into reserves as originally envisioned. Half of Personnel Committee's recommended salary increase for the YM Secretary is also included. Contributions to FGC, FUM and FWCC are funded at the same level as last year. As mentioned by Jonathan, there are concerns that fundraising campaigns by related Quaker organizations present the challenge of communicating to Friends that while those are good causes to support, such donations do not help meet the YM's budget.

**11-45 Purpose and Procedures for Permanent Board:** The Clerk asked Friends to review the proposed changes to PB-related committees in the document presented to Coordinating and Advisory Committee last month and sent to PB as an advance document.

Memorial Minutes – Upon recommendation from a member of the Memorial Minutes Committee, Friends reconsidered the decision to make the Committee a standing committee (see PB Minutes 11-04 and 11-30). **Friends approved** maintaining the ad hoc status of Memorial Minutes Committee.

Clerks Nominating – The Clerk read the proposed revision of the purpose and procedures for Clerks Nominating Committee. A member of the Committee stated that they see themselves as a nominating committee and not a support committee; the proposed language seeks to clarify this distinction. The YM Secretary shared concerns about the need to improve the support structure for the YM Presiding Clerk as one way to open up the possibility of recruiting people for that position who have full-time employment. While helping to ensure that establishment of a support structure for a new Presiding Clerk is at the heart of the Committee's work, Clerks Nominating Committee should not be responsible for providing such support. Friends asked the Committee to continue their discernment and bring back new language to replace the last sentence in the proposed revision.

**11-46 Request from Christian Education Committee:** The Clerk read the rationale presented by the Christian Education Committee for its request to change the Committee's name to "Quaker Youth Education Committee." While some Friends expressed approval for the proposal and appreciation for the Committee's rationale that the proposed name better represents the breadth of its work, other Friends were uneasy with the change and recognized the pain this proposal will likely cause for those who identify strongly with the Christian roots of our faith. Friends were unable to reach unity on a recommendation for Sessions, except that we be tender with each other during the discernment.

**11-47 Report of YM Nominating Committee:** Christopher McCandless, co-convenor of the YM Nominating Committee, reported for the Committee, presenting the following recommendations:

- Moses Brown School Board: Fredrick Martin (Monadnock)

**Friends approved** forwarding this recommendation to the Moses Brown School Board.

**11-48 Report of Clerks Nominating Committee:** Jan Hoffman reported for the Committee, presenting the following recommendations for the Clerks Table in 2012:

- YM Presiding Clerk: Jaqueline Stillwell (Monadnock)
- Recording Clerks: Brian Drayton (Weare) and Rebecca Leuchak (Providence)
- Reading Clerks: Will Jennings (Beacon Hill) and Beth Bussiere-Nichols (Portland)

**Friends approved** these recommendations.

In response to a question, Jan described the Committee's discernment process: first the committee members articulate the gifts they believe are needed by the YM; then they sit together in worship and see which names rise up; in the case of the Presiding Clerk, two members of the committee go and meet with that Friend to share the Committee's discernment and respond to questions and concerns.

**11-49 Travel Minutes for Noah Baker-Merrill and Victoria Hollingsworth Rhodin:**

The Clerk read the endorsements of travel minutes for Noah Baker-Merrill and Victoria Hollingsworth Rhodin written by the Clerk of Cuba Yearly Meeting at the conclusion of their ministry among Cuban Friends in February of this year. Friends received these endorsements, expressing deep gratitude for these words bearing powerful testimony to the faithful ministry of these Friends.

**11-50 Memorial Minutes:** During the course of the day, Friends heard memorial minutes celebrating the lives of these Friends: Grace (Riordan) Blaber (Worcester), Elise Boulding (Wellesley), Bruce Martin (Hartford), Hermann Patt, Jr. (Worcester), Charles Perry (Westerly), and Virginia Townsend (Cambridge).

Rhode Island-Smithfield Quarter had not recommended forwarding Grace Blaber's memorial minute to Sessions. **Friends approved** forwarding the other five memorial minutes to Sessions, asking that the Memorial Minutes Committee review and edit them, as necessary.

**11-51 Closing Worship:** We closed in waiting worship, planning to meet again on Saturday, August 6, 2011, at 9:30 AM at Bryant University in Smithfield, RI.

Edward Baker, Clerk  
John Humphries, Recording Clerk