

Permanent Board Minutes
September 28, 2019

Attendees:

PB

Leslie Manning, Darcy Drayton, Thomas Vargo, Ian Harrington, William Walkausas, John Reuthe, Christopher Gant, Gina Nortonsmith, Travis Belcher, Sara Smith, Jean McCandless, Will Taber, Edward Mair, Mary Zwirner, Rebecca Leuchak, Christopher McCandless.

Ex-Officio, Noah Merrill, Fritz Weiss, Bruce Neumann, Shearman Taber, Bruce Neumann

Visitors: Em McManamy, Jackie Stillwell, Nia Thomas, Louanne McDonald, Sarah Gant, Martha Schwope, Jeremiah Dickinson, Phebe McCosker, Diane Dicranian,

Regrets: Hannah Forsythe, Ben Guaraldi, Carole Rein, Rosemary Zimmerman, Martin Forsythe, Peter Bishop, Elizabeth Reuthe. Deanna Chase

M&C

LVM Shelton, Brian Drayton, Honor Woodrow, Richard Lindo [incomplete list]

M&C regrets: Jay O'Hara, Carl Williams, Carolyn Hilles, JJ Smith, Steve McKnight, Jerry Szama, Marian Baker, Cathy Olsen

2019-09-01 Presiding Clerk report:

Bruce Neumann reflected on the difference between being “rising clerk” and actually being presiding clerk and carrying that concern. He finds his attention and concern for the Yearly Meeting coming into sharper focus. He has made a date to visit some meetings to talk about the FUM withholding minute adopted at sessions this past summer. The Clerk of the FUM General Board has acknowledged receipt of the letter that was sent to him at the direction of Sessions. Our three representatives to the General Board have also been charged with continuing to work to draft a new sexual ethics policy. The Racial, Social and Economic Justice committee is organizing a group for LGBTQ concerns that will be looking at this issue and looking to propose solutions.

The evaluations from Sessions included many comments expressing support, suggestions for improvement and strong negative reactions to our new practice of noticing patterns of oppression and faithfulness. Four or 5 yearly meetings sent people to NEYM to watch this process. Bruce reported that he knows that someone left sessions because of macro and micro aggressions. He recommended that each of us needs to become aware of our own internalized patterns and the ways that we speak that hurt. We need to be aware of the effects of both our personal and our corporate practice.

2019-09-02 General Secretary Report.

Noah Merrill spoke to his report. He prays that this year will be a year of choices and living into those choices together. Friends traditionally have surrendered to the guidance of the Spirit, giving over our own willing and allowing ourselves to hear the voice of the Guide. There is a potential stumbling block in this yielding and surrendering – abdicating our role in the work we are called to do. Our work lives at the intersection of yielding and choosing to act with clarity and boldness when we have seen what needs to be done. As a Yearly Meeting, we have been growing in our capacity for self-awareness. This happens through our imperfect work of noticing patterns of oppression and faithfulness, our looking at how we have to change our culture, and our seeking how we can engage in the wider body of Friends, including FUM. He spoke of Friends attending the celebration of 400 years of black resilience and joining in a sense of fellowship with other communions we have not always related to well. The choices we make matter, There are costs to action and costs to inaction. Let us surrender to the Spirit and take bold actions.

Noah provided a number of updates.

The spring Living Faith gathering will be held on April 4, 2020.

The North Fairfield Meeting House survey has been completed and some issues have arisen from that need to be dealt with. One friend noted that none of the Permanent Board activities around North Fairfield have been reported to Vassalboro Quarter which is still holding the people who made up that meeting. We are doing a lot of good work but there is something more that we can be doing.

A few years ago, NEYM received an unsolicited grant of \$8000 to deal with concerns about aging. People who were under that concern at the time have used about half of that money but they have since laid down their work. We are exploring affiliating with a program in NYYM. If meetings have concerns about aging or are already doing work in this area, they can consult with the Noah about this to help us consider our options.

Noah's evaluation has been delayed his supervisor has recently had hip surgery. We expect the review to be completed soon. The results will be conveyed to Coordinating and Advisory committee and a report will be brought to the November Permanent Board Meeting.

2019-09-03 Support of Ministry and Spiritual Life

One of the overarching barriers to participating in leadership in the YM is that many of our leadership roles have such vague priorities and parameters that it feels overwhelming and provides a barrier for people stepping into these roles. At the direction of Sessions, Ministry and Counsel has been charged with supporting Permanent Board in creating a working group charged with exploring & naming how NEYM currently supports ministry and spiritual life. Nia Thomas presented the following proposal for this working group.

Permanent Board Working Group

To Examine New England Yearly Meeting's Support for Ministry and Spiritual Life

Charge: We ask this working group to explore where and how support for ministry and spiritual life currently happens among New England Friends and offer recommendations for structures, practices and leadership roles that would best serve the current needs of Friends.

Report: To Permanent Board at their May 16 meeting

Processes to Consider:

- Review current job description of Clerk of Ministry & Counsel
- Review the current Purpose, Procedure, and Composition for NEYM's M&C and make recommendations to C&A about what might be added or taken out of the charge
- Review the document summarizing the work of M&C (based on recent M&C and Sessions minutes) and consult with current members of Ministry & Counsel including the Clerk of Ministry & Counsel as well as recent former Clerks of Ministry & Counsel to learn where and how this work is currently happening within that structure and what challenges exist
- Consult with members of M&C to explore how they perceive their work in relation to the YM; possibly by interviewing a random subset of M&C members and/or by engaging in dialogue with M&C during an M&C meeting
- Consult with other regional bodies to explore various structures, practices, and roles that are used to support ministry and spiritual life
- Consult with New England Friends currently and recently traveling in the ministry or otherwise publicly sharing their ministry to identify the supports they currently utilize and where gaps exist
- Consult with a variety of local meetings to learn more about how NEYM's support for ministry and spiritual life is impactful and where gaps exist
- Consult with a variety of local meetings to learn how they support ministry and spiritual life.
- Consult with the Yearly Meeting Secretary and other leaders and staff about how current and proposed structures impact or would impact other aspects of NEYM's functioning

Questions to Consider:

- What concrete changes (such as structures, practices, and roles) might simplify or improve the function of the Yearly Meeting in regards to supporting ministry and spiritual life?
- What concrete changes (such as structures, practices, and roles) could NEYM take to strengthen the vibrancy of local meetings?
- What functions need to be performed at the Yearly Meeting level for a vital Quaker movement in New England?
- Are there opportunities to lay down or reassign any responsibilities currently carried by NEYM Ministry & Counsel?
- How might NEYM better identify and support emerging ministries?
- What kind of culture in relation to ministry do Friends in New England seek to nurture?
- What current structures, practices and roles are effective in supporting ministry and spiritual life?

Friends approved.

2019-09-04

The Clerk of Permanent Board, the Clerk of M&C in consultation with Nia Thomas will name members to this working group. If names occur to you to serve on this working group, give them to Leslie Manning or Honor Woodrow. The working group is encouraged to make progress reports to both Ministry and Counsel and Permanent Board.

2019-09-05 Gifts:

Leslie Manning had us read from cards left over from our intergenerational worship at sessions containing gifts of ministry and their definitions. We entered into a period of worship out of which Friends lifted up gifts that had life for them.

2019-09-06 State of Society Report

Fran Brokaw and Richard Lindo read the NEYM State of Society report and Friends held it and its queries in worship.

2019-09-07 Friends Camp Operating Budget.

Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp Director, and John Reuthe, Clerk of Friends Camp Committee presented the Friends Camp Operating budget for FY 2020, attached. Friends approved.

2019-09-08 Friends Camp Capital Budget

Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp Director, and John Reuthe, Clerk of Friends Camp Committee presented the Friends Camp Capital budget for FY 2020, attached. Friends approved.

2019-09-09 Budget Priorities Project

Noah Merrill reported that Coordinating and Advisory Committee has started working on the budget priorities for next year. They are committed to funding recommendations of the Clerking Structures working group. Other priorities that they are considering include assistance for starting new meetings, training and support for people called to ministry, increased funding for communications support, increased funding for development support, begin setting money aside for 2023 FWCC Triennial, new trailer for JYM - JHYM, streamline registration website, increase professional development for staff, rebuild reserves of YM, adult religious education, outreach consulting and training, and funding for visitors.

This year C&A will start looking at how to make the assessments about what programs do not have life in them and might be removed from our funding priorities. Anyone with thoughts on what process might be used, or programs might be laid down should forward them to Noah before October 15, 2019. C&A will use this input to generate a list of tests to use in the discernment of letting go of projects.

2019-09-10 Inclusive Leadership Development

Nia Thomas reported on her work on Inclusive Leadership Development. She has been trying to focus her work on committees that are in back to school mode as they start their work for the year. Since her written report she has also met with Internal Nominating Committee. Noah Merrill reminded us that her written reports are presented to C&A as a way to hold that group accountable for their undertakings.

2019-09-11 Finance Committee Handbook

Robert Murray presented the Finance Committee Handbook for approval. He noted the following changes that will be made to the draft presented to us

1. In Section 1.3.4 the current text on size of checks requiring two signatures will be replaced with the 2019 Sessions minute regarding that.
2. In section 5.1. the Budget Priorities section will be replaced with the Permanent Board minute to more accurately describe the budget process that we are following.

3. In section 3.3, Monthly Meeting Restrictions re. FUM Personnel Policy, the text which was correct at the time it was originally submitted to Permanent Board prior to Sessions, will be replaced with either the minute from Sessions 2019 on this subject, or a summary of that minute. This will reflect current approved practice.
4. The nominating procedure for Treasurer will be fixed so the two places it is mentioned are identical.

Friends approved these changes.

This handbook will replace all previous handbooks and all outdated minutes having to do with these topics. This handbook becomes the document of record, to be amended in the future when a) errors are discovered, or b) when policies change.

Section 3.2 on Restricted Contributions needs revisions. These changes will be brought to Permanent Board at a later time.

2019-09-12 Nominating Committee

Jackie Stillwell presented the report of Nominating Committee, attached.

They recommend Rebecca Leuchak for Sessions Committee clerk, for a 3 year term starting now.

Beth Morrill is recommended for clerk of Racial, Social and Economic Justice Committee for a 3 year term starting now.

They recommend Deana Chase for Permanent Board for a 5 year term starting now.

These nominations were approved.

2019-09-13 Development Report

Noah Merrill reported on the state of development efforts in the Yearly Meeting. He has had the opportunity to work with 4 clerks of the Development Committee. He has seen a lot of growth in this work over this time. We have moved into a model where the Yearly Meeting secretary is coordinating the development work of the Yearly Meeting staff and volunteers. They send separate letters to members who have donated and to those who have never donated. There are appeals at the end of the fiscal year and the end of the calendar year. Give Monthly donors has increased to 101 families. There will be a Money and Spirit event on March 28. Our funding priorities process allows us to more clearly articulate the work of the Yearly Meeting to donors. He has found blessing in having conversations with individuals and meetings about increasing their contributions to the Yearly Meeting.

This year we will be discerning what is the best model for using volunteers in the development efforts of the the Yearly Meeting. This will be carried out as part of the Purposes and Procedures review of the Development Committee.

2019-09-14 Appreciation for Development Committee clerks

The Permanent Board appreciates the work of Chris Gantt, Nancy Haines, Deana Chase and Sarah Smith who have served as clerks of the Development Committee. Their work has helped lead the Yearly Meeting to a better financial condition. Their work has helped provide opportunities for Friends to see and support the work of the yearly meeting.

2019-09-15 Climate Witness Action

Kathleen Wooten reported on the Climate Witness Action taking place today in Bow, NH at the last active coal fired power plant in New England. About 200 people attended. There people who entered

with buckets and shovels to carry out coal. Others blocked the gate to the plant. Up to 40 people have been arrested. Jay O'Hara was arrested as he got out of his car based on a warrant from a previous action. The NEYM Fund for Sufferings is available to provide funds for bail and fines and other expenses for people undertaking witness at the discretion of the Permanent Board clerk.

2019-09-16 Faith and Practice Revision

Fritz Weiss reported on a meeting that he and Sarah Gant had with the Faith and Practice Revision Committee about their progress. The last time Faith and Practice got guidance from the Yearly Meeting was 18 years ago. The committee would like to hear if there were priorities on what sections they should be working on next. Fritz and Sarah encouraged F&P to trust their discernment on the text since they have looked at the issues they address more deeply than most other people who are reviewing their work. How might the process of writing, feedback, review, and approval be changed? How might people be brought into the process for limited pieces of the work? What is the final product of their work? Should it be a book or something else? Permanent Board will seek at a later meeting about what guidance we might provide the committee.

2019-09-17 Report from the Challenging White Supremacy Working Group Report

The Challenging White Supremacy Working Group (CWS) has had one meeting (9/19/2019) since NEYM sessions. This year at Sessions we chose to work in supportive and collaborative roles, supporting the work of other anti-racism groups, and being available to support members of NEYM community. In particular, we facilitated a series of lunch table conversations working in conjunction with Racial, Social, and Economic Justice (RSEJ) Committee, and attended and supported workshops presented by the Noticing Patterns working Group.

The lunch table conversations were productive and engaged many people. Members of both CWS and RSEJ served as facilitators. The topics progressed during the week, and attendance ranged from to >30 to ~15 on Wednesday. We heard that many Meetings are actively talking about race and racism, particularly regarding implicit bias and internalized White Supremacy. Many have book discussion groups; others have invited facilitators from CWS and others to host workshops. The lack of racial and ethnic diversity in Meetings troubles many people, and some Meetings are undertaking Welcoming Initiatives to work toward making Meeting spaces more comfortable for people of color and newcomers. A number of participants expressed desire to bring home the importance of addressing race with members and attendees of their Meetings, and welcome support from NEYM in those conversations. The questions used to spark discussions at lunch tables are attached.

As we move into our 3rd year of work as an ad hoc work group of Permanent Board, we see continuing roles for the Challenging White Supremacy group in NEYM, we plan to revisit our charge as a committee. A member of our work group used the metaphor of a group journey or hike to describe anti-racism work in NEYM. Guides leading the way have experience, creativity, and passion, and often are breaking new ground. Along the way, other guides provide assistance to fellow travelers, including feedback, suggestions, and advice. Another set of guides follows in the rear, making sure no one is left behind, inviting new people to join the journey. Members of CWS are particularly sensitive to the need in NEYM to have leaders attending to this third category and believe we are well-positioned for this task. We recognize anti-racism is a life-long journey, with multiple entry points along the way. People may not enter into this work until later in life, and that is OK. Our goal is to meet people where they are and encourage them to join us. We believe that deeper relationships and collaboration with other groups committed to anti-racism, specifically the RSEJ Committee and the Noticing & Naming Patterns of Oppression & Faithfulness work group of M&C,

will strengthen all our work and help NEYM move forward in a deep commitment toward becoming an anti-racist faith community.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Brokaw & Susan Davies (co-clerks),

Julie DeSherbinin

Jeremiah Dickinson

Anita Mendes

Carole Rein

Will Taber

Diana White

Judy Williams Mary Zwirner

2019-09-18 Return of Travel Minutes

There were three returned travel minutes from people who have traveled outside of the Yearly Meeting in the past year. What is the proper mechanism for us to complete the loop of sending people out and receiving back the report after the travel? We suggest that we send a document explaining the endorsement process for returning travel minutes with travel minutes endorsed by Permanent Board. We also suggest the PB Clerk maintain a tickler file of outstanding travel minutes.

2019-09-19 Policies for Travel to Cuba

Em McMannamy from the Puente Committee presented updates to our travel policies for travel to Cuba. Currently travelers are required to perform many steps before they come to Permanent Board for approval. Puente would like to get Permanent Board give general approval for a group trip with approval for individual travelers being the responsibility of the individual's clearness committee and final approval from the Clerk of Permanent Board or the Presiding Clerk.

This new process would override the previous process that was approved 27 years ago.

Puente de Amigos Committee Procedures for Approval for Visitors to Cuban Friends

This document summarizes the steps to be taken for approval of travelers from NEYM to Cuba through the Puente de Amigos process. Legal as well as spiritual aspects of the process must be followed for right order. Careful spiritual discernment is important. Puente Committee maintains several other more detailed documents which are equally important to the inter-visitation process.

1. Letter of interest from traveler to Puente Committee and request for clearness from Monthly Meeting (MM), including the spiritual intent of the journey.
2. Puente clerks inform the Permanent Board (PB) of the general information (Meeting, timing, etc.) and request approval in advance of individual clearness and Puente approval.
3. Monthly Meeting Ministry & Counsel Committee (or other committee as appropriate) considers each

traveler and if deemed clear, forwards to MM Meeting for Business. MM clerk forwards minute of approval and letter of introduction for each approved group to Puente Committee and to Quarterly Meeting(QM).*

4.QM(or clerk of QM) approves each traveler.*

5.Puente Committee further discerns clearness of each traveler and, if approved, provides orientation/advice to prepare for the trip.

6.Puente Committee seeks Cuba Yearly Meeting approval, formal invitation and visas for travelers.

7.PB clerk or presiding clerk of NEYM approves travelers, signs clerk's letter, creates transmittal letter(s) as needed for donations and forwards list of approved travelers to PB.

8.Upon their return, travelers return signed letter of introduction or travel minute to Puente Committee, MM, QM, & PB.

*Quarterly Meeting approval is required only for those with a travel minute.

Friends approved this policy.

2019-09-20 Travel to Cuba

Puente is preparing a delegation to attend Cuba Yearly Meeting Sessions in February. Bruce Neumann will be making the trip to introduce himself to Cuba Yearly Meeting.

Friends approved this travel.

The meeting ended with a period of worship.