

Opening Worship 9 AM

“Teach me your ways, O God, that I may live according to your truth!
Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honor you.” Psalm 86:11

Welcome and Roll Call 9:30

Approval of Minutes of 7/11/20

Minutes of 2020 Annual Sessions requiring Approval (to be recorded by Peter Bishop)

Presiding Clerk's Report (Q and A)

Sessions Committee Clerk's report and dialogue for feedback (15 minutes)

FY 2021 Budget Approval, Bob Murray, Treasurer and former clerk of Finance

Update on FY 2020

Break (about 10:45)

Secretary's Report

Reports from Working Groups:

Action Items: Reaffirm Noticing Patterns? Reparations repurposing

Personnel Committee Repurposing

Nominating Reports:

Internal: Our provisional nominations for the Personnel Resources Working Group are:

Nat Shed and Elizabeth Szatkowski, both from Portland Meeting. Both have served on the Personnel Committee.

Friends Camp Committee: Sarah LaFleur is a former camper and counselor at Friends Camp. She was an attender at Cambridge Meeting before her recent move to Maine and an active volunteer with Young Friends, even serving as the assistant coordinator at Sessions for two years. Sarah recently moved back to Camden, her hometown, to be an elementary school teacher. Sarah has a masters degree in education and significant experience as a community organizer. We think she is a wonderful fit!

Break

Minute from Sandwich Quarter

Purpose and Procedures of the Perm Board review

<https://neym.org/committees/permanent-board> (name change/proportional representation by Quarters)

Expectations of Board members for the coming year

Closing worship 12:45

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Permanent Board Meeting Held Over Zoom Video Conference July 11, 2020

20-53: Opening Worship

Friends opened with a period of worship.

20-54: Role Call

The recording clerk called the role:

Present: Leslie Manning, Clerk; Hannah Zwirner Forsythe, Recording Clerk; Travis Belcher, Peter Bishop, Martin Zwirner Forsythe, Chris Gant, Ben Guaraldi, Ian Harrington, Rebecca Leuchak, Ed Mair, Christopher McCandless, Jean McCandless, Gina Nortonsmith, Anna Raddochia, Carole Rein, John Reuthe, Martha Schwope, Sara Smith, Will Taber, Bill Walkauskas, Tom Vargo, Mary Zwirner

Ex Officio: Noah Merrill (Secretary); Bob Murray (Finance Clerk); Bruce Neumann (Presiding Clerk); Elizabeth Reuthe (Secretary's Supervisor); Shearman Taber (Treasurer)

Visitors: Clarence Burley, Marian Dalton, Sophie Forsythe, Sarah Gant, Lisa Graustein, Beth Hansen, Janet Hough, LouAnne MacDonald, Frederick Martin, Phebe McCosker, Jane Griswold Radocchia, Jackie Stillwell, Nia Thomas, Morgan Wilson, Honor Woodrow, Kathleen Wooten, Rod Zwirner

Regrets: Fritz Weiss (Former Presiding Clerk); Deana Chase, Darcy Drayton, Kim Harvey Garcia, Elizabeth Szatkowski

20-55: Minutes

Minutes from the Permanent Board's June 6th meeting were circulated in the advanced documents for Friends' comments and questions.

Friends approved the June 6th minutes.

20-56: Nominating Committee Report

Jackie Stillwell, clerk of Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee (NC), shared a brief update from that committee. Her written report is appended. When the COVID-19 pandemic began NC chose to focus their attention on a smaller number of essential roles and committees in light of the short supply of energy. Members of NC checked in with committees about what they were

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specifically in need of and responded to those requests. The full slate of nominations to Yearly Meeting committees is appended.

Friends approved the slate of nominations.

Leslie Manning, clerk of the Permanent Board, acknowledged that Honor Woodrow's service as clerk of Ministry and Counsel will end at the close of Sessions 2020. Leslie thanked Honor for her service to the Yearly Meeting in this role and requested that the Recording Clerk write a minute of appreciation for her contributions.

20-57: Minute of Appreciation

Members of the Permanent Board recognize the deeply faithful work that Honor Woodrow has contributed as clerk and recording clerk of Ministry and Counsel. During her term as clerk the Yearly Meeting has wrestled with the form and function of Ministry and Counsel and struggled with maintaining the vitality and vibrancy of spiritual life that our members so deeply desire. Throughout this Honor has been a steadfast listener and an authentic communicator of the truth. We are grateful for the integrity and dedication that Honor has shown and in awe of the unwavering love that Honor has for our community.

20-58: Nomination of New Treasurer

Jackie Stillwell, clerk of the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee, brought the nomination of Robert Murray for the role of Yearly Meeting Treasurer, to begin at the close of Sessions 2020.

Friends approved this nomination.

Leslie Manning, Clerk, thanked Shearman Taber for his service as Treasurer and requested the writing of a minute in appreciation of Shearman's contributions to the Yearly Meeting.

20-59: Minute of Appreciation

Friends of the Permanent Board note with great appreciation the service of Shearman Taber. Shearman has given careful attention to the financial concerns of the Yearly Meeting, serving for many years as treasurer. To this work he has brought a well ordered balance between spiritual visioning and practical concerns, and helped us to find our way faithfully. We give thanks to God for Shearman's willingness to serve Friends in New England.

20-60: Internal Nominating Report

Will Taber, clerk of Internal Nominating, shared the slate from that committee.

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Dawn Tripp for Yearly Meeting Nominating at Large, Class of 2023

Elizabeth Reuthe renominated as Supervisor to the YM Secretary, Class of 2023

Friends approved these nominations.

Will informed Friends that Betsy Kantt has resigned from the Permanent Board.

Will noted that with the completion of his term on Internal Nominating, Allan Kohrman has decided to step back from service on Yearly Meeting committees. Will and Leslie Manning, Clerk, thanked Allan for his years of dedicated service and asked for a minute of appreciation to be written.

20-61: Minute of Appreciation

Insert minute of appreciation for Allan Kohrman

20-62: Clerks Table Nominating

Ed Mair, member of Clerks Table Nominating, brought the nomination of Gordon Peters for the role of reading clerk, class of 2023.

Friends approved.

20-63: Budget Process

Robert Murray, clerk of the Finance Committee (FC), informed the board about a change to the process for approving the FY2021 budget. Typically the budget is approved at Sessions but in order to reserve our limited time at Sessions for programming, the budget will come to the September meeting of the Permanent Board. The FC will hold a number of listening sessions between Sessions and the September meeting so that the wider body has an opportunity to ask questions, and express comments and concerns.

20-64: Treasurer's Report

Shearman Taber, Treasurer, spoke to his written report, which is appended. In his report Shearman expressed significant concerns about the current financial situation and the wider economy in general. Friends had the opportunity to share questions and concerns.

20-65: Bank Letters and Resolutions

Bob Murray, clerk of the Finance Committee, brought forward bank letters and resolutions for Friends approval. These are typically approved by the body at Sessions but the Permanent

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Board is approving them this year to avoid extra items on the agenda during our virtual Sessions.

The following resolutions are brought by the Finance Committee:

1. That Robert Murray be appointed New England Yearly Meeting treasurer for the ensuing year or until a successor is appointed and qualified.
2. That Robert M. Spivey be appointed Friends Camp treasurer for the ensuing year or until a successor is appointed and qualified.
3. That Robert Murray, Yearly Meeting treasurer; and Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting secretary; be individually authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of New England Yearly Meeting as needed.
4. That Robert M. Spivey, Friends Camp treasurer; and Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp director, be individually authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of Friends Camp as needed.
5. That Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting secretary; Robert Murray, New England Yearly Meeting treasurer; and Bruce Neumann, presiding clerk, be designated as alternate signers, individually, of all bank accounts of New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, except those checks for greater than \$10,000, which shall require the signatures of two signers from the list above.
6. That Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp director; Robert M. Spivey, Friends Camp treasurer; and John Reuthe, Friends Camp Committee clerk, be authorized, individually, as signers of the Friends Camp bank accounts, except those checks for greater than \$10,000, which shall require the signatures of two signers from the list above.

Friends approved the bank letters and resolutions.

20-66: Comment from the Secretary on Finances

Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary, shared his take on the current Yearly Meeting (YM) financial situation. We are slightly behind on individual giving, but Noah does not feel that we are facing an unprecedented deficit. The decision was made this spring to not send out a spring appeal letter for donations in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its financial repercussions for individuals and families. We will have more information about the YM financial situation after the appeal letter goes out and after we know about Sessions registration.

The Finance Committee is prepared to revise the FY2021 budget, as necessary, before the September meeting. Care and caution is good, but we haven't seen dramatic changes in giving that causes significant concern, and our current deficit is not substantially larger than other years.

20-67: Sessions Update

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Bruce Neumann, Presiding Clerk, shared a brief update on the planning for Sessions. His report is appended. Bruce has spent a lot of time in discernment about how we can best use our time together at Sessions. As the uprisings in support of racial justice have swelled across the country this summer it became clear to Bruce that our limited Sessions time should be focused on the anti-racism work being done in our meetings and communities. The specifics of the week are still being determined but Friends affirmed this direction for the week.

20-68: Apology Letter to Native Americans

At our June meeting a proposed letter of apology to Native Americans was discussed. Friends had numerous comments and concerns about the letter and requested that a new draft be brought to this meeting. That draft is appended.

Friends expressed concern that the revised draft of this letter did not reflect the recommendations made at June's meeting. This current draft centers us and not the pain that we have caused.

Facing a lack of unity with the current letter, it was proposed that the Reparations Working Group work with Sara Smith, Peter Bishop, Martha Schwope, and other interested individuals, on a further revision of the letter of apology with the goal of finalizing a letter at a separate meeting prior to Sessions. They will meet by July 25th.

Friends approved of this path forward.

20-69: Secretary's Report

Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary, reflected on the ways the Yearly Meeting has been working to connect and support Friends.

How can the heart of our tradition be lived out today? We will be new people after this pandemic; we are being changed both as individuals and as a society of Friends. We don't have to wait until we've arrived in the new place to live as if the truth is true. We have the opportunity to live into the current changes even if where we are isn't where we will eventually be.

20-70: Land Swap

Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary, shared a proposal from the Lincoln School in Providence, RI, to swap a small piece of unusable land with the city of Providence for an equivalent amount of land that the city owns. This proposal comes to the Permanent Board because New England Yearly Meeting owns the land on which the Lincoln School sits. The details of the land swap are in the appended proposal.

Friends had the opportunity to ask questions and comment on the proposal.

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Friends approved the proposed land swap.

20-71: Friends Camp Budget

Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp Director, brought the first quarter budget for Friends Camp to the Permanent Board for approval. The proposed budget is appended. Because of the pandemic Anna and the camp committee have proposed a slightly different budget proposal timeline for FY2021. We anticipate receiving a proposed budget for the remainder of FY2021 at a later meeting.

Friends approved the proposed budget for the first quarter of FY2021.

20-72: Report from Ministry and Spiritual Life Work Group

Sarah Gant, clerk of the Ministry and Spiritual Life Working Group, spoke to the written report from that group. That report is appended. This working group anticipates reporting to the Permanent Board this fall.

20-73: Resources Supporting Volunteer Leadership

Nia Thomas, Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator, presented a draft charge for a working group to examine resources to support volunteer leadership. The request for this working group comes out of the approved recommendations from Sessions 2019 to address inclusive leadership development.

This working group is asked to explore how NEYM might responsibly and consistently reduce financial barriers to our most essential volunteer leadership roles, specifically Presiding Clerk, Clerk of the Permanent Board, Clerk of Ministry & Counsel, and Treasurer. They will report to the Permanent Board at the end of October.

Friends were asked to approve the creation of this group, giving Leslie the authority to name its members.

Friends approved.

We are reminded that barriers to leadership don't just arise when someone is being asked to take on a leadership role. There are barriers to participation in the Yearly Meeting which make certain people less likely to be noticed as potential leaders. Who would benefit from changes to barriers to leadership? Let's focus this work on specific people.

20-74: Travel Minute

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Sarah Gant, a member of Lisa Graustein's support committee, read a travel minute for Lisa's work with Niyonu Spann to "co-facilitate a two-year collaboration with US and Canadian Friends to develop a racial-justice consultation/training program for Friends".

Friends approved Lisa's travel minute. We look forward to hearing from Lisa and her organizational partners about this important work.

20-75: Israel/Palestine Working Group

Leslie Manning, Clerk, reminded Friends that we, the Permanent Board (PB), are charged with doing the work of Sessions. At Sessions 2017 the body approved a minute naming our concern with the ongoing conflict in Israel and Palestine. Carl Williams, clerk of Northwest Quarter brought a concern and request from that quarter that Sessions, and the PB as its representatives, reaffirm the 2017 minute and appoint a working group to discern future actions for the Yearly Meeting (YM). The recommended proposal is appended.

Friends expressed concerns about whether this is work that we are actually engaged with corporately. There are additional concerns about how this group interacts with and is related to the current self-appointed working group whose relationship with the YM has been complicated.

Friends approved this working group to be carefully overseen by C&A.

20-74: Memorial Minutes

Throughout the meeting we heard excerpts from the memorial for Mary Manglesdorf, Paul Manglesdorf, Greg Williams.

Friends approved forwarding the memorial minutes to Sessions.

20-75: Closing Worship

Friends closed with a period of worship. We will meet again on September 19th.

Appreciation for Allan Kohrman

Voici! Avec amour!

We celebrate our long friendship with Allan Kohrman, who has devoted 45 years of service to our Yearly Meeting and is now moving on to new chapters in his retirement. Allan has been a prayerful companion, often deepening worship by sharing Quaker and Biblical wisdoms. He is a font of knowledge about Quakers both historical and contemporary, and also the author of several Pendle Hill pamphlets, including "Quakers and Jews." Many friends have benefited from heartfelt, sometimes passionate discussions with him and appreciate his faithfulness to his leadings. He was a fixture of Permanent Board for many years, both as a member and as a visitor. As a very active member of our Nominating Committees for years, Allan recruited so many Friends into service that one friend called his talent an "incredible, God-given gift." We are also blessed that Allan has been accompanied at many of our gatherings by his wife Carolyn and son Adam, who have brought their own gifts to the wider community of New England Yearly Meeting.

Minutes for Approval

Clerk's note: Because of the global COVID-19 pandemic, NEYM Annual Sessions in 2020 were held on-line. Zoom video-conferencing software was used to enable connections from Friends' households. While many Friends had used Zoom for committee meetings, and for Monthly Meeting worship and business during the months before Sessions, this annual session was our first experience with large-scale meetings by video conference.

Opening Celebration - Saturday morning August 1, 2020

1.1 Opening and Welcome

A slideshow of photos from meetings around New England was displayed as people entered our virtual space. Presiding clerk Bruce Neumann (Fresh Pond) welcomed everyone by singing "Row On." He then acknowledged the indigenous lands where NEYM member meetings are situated. Having displayed a map of traditional tribal lands, he asked us to enter into chat those lands on which each of us is currently located.

1.2 Introductions

The presiding clerk introduced members of the clerks' table, the tech team, and the pastoral care team.

- Recording clerks: Peter Bishop (Northampton), Marian Dalton (Brunswick)
- Reading clerks: Gina Nortonsmith (Northampton), John Humphries (Hartford)
- Tech team: David Coletta (Beacon Hill), Jennifer Swann, Kathy Malin (Smithfield), Elizabeth Hacala, Kathleen Wooten (Fresh Pond), Bob O'Connor (Vassalboro), Will Taber (Fresh Pond), Sara Hubner (Gonic), Brenda Nolan (West Falmouth), Jonah Sutton-Morse (Concord)
- Pastoral Care team: Abby Matchette (Burlington), Laura Hoskins (Putney), Caroline Stone (Wellesley), Elizabeth Szatkowski (Portland).
- The clerk also noted that as is our past practice, there are and will be a number of prayerful presences holding the body of the yearly meeting during times of worship and business. The following Friends acted as elders during the week:

Allison Randall (Keene), Janet Hough (Cobscook), Kathy Olsen (East Sandwich), Carl Williams (Plainfield), Minga Claggett-Borne (Cambridge), Fran Brokaw (Hanover), Joyce Gibson (Durham), Martha Sheldon (Durham), Marian Baker (Weare), Eleanor Godway (Hartford), Hugh MacArthur (Hanover)

The clerk reviewed basic Zoom practices for us to follow during the meeting and let us know how to contact someone for technical assistance.

1.3 Roll Call

Reading clerks called the roll of meetings by quarter, asking those from each meeting to unmute themselves and say hello as their meeting was called. (268 Zoom connections were logged in.) Despite this being an electronic process, attenders relished the opportunity to greet the gathered body.

1.4 Acknowledgements

The clerk acknowledged the work of the many people in a wide variety of capacities whose efforts contributed to making these sessions possible.

1.5 New Babies, First Time Attendees, and Visitors

We celebrated any new babies among us and welcomed first time attenders. Throughout the week the following visitors identified themselves and were welcomed.

Cherice Bock, North Valley Friends Church, Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting

Kirsten Bohl, North Carolina Yearly Meeting Conservative

S.Y. Bowland, Morningside Monthly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting

Olivia Brangan, Wrightstown Meeting (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting)

Hilary Burgin, Quaker Voluntary Service

Dove John, North Valley Friends Church, Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting

Elaine Emily, Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting, Pacific Yearly Meeting

Lilia Fick, Ottawa Monthly Meeting, Canada Yearly Meeting
Melanie Gifford, Adelphi Friends Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting
Mary Kay Glazer, Greenville Friends Meeting, North Carolina Yearly Meeting Conservative
Karen Gonzalez, Iglesia Evangelica Amigos de EL Salvador
Jesse Grace, New Association of Friends, West Richmond (IN) Friends Meeting
Katie Green, Clearwater Monthly Meeting, Southeastern Yearly Meeting
Nancy Haines, Durham Friends Meeting, North Carolina Yearly Meeting Conservative
David Haines, Durham Friends Meeting, North Carolina Yearly Meeting Conservative
Mey Hasbrook, Kalamazoo Monthly Meeting, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting
McKenna Hayden, camper at Farm & Wilderness (Virginia)
Jennifer Higgins-Newman, Beacon Hill Monthly Meeting, Beacon Hill Friends House
Faith Josephs, (Charlotte Friends Meeting, Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting, Associate Sec'y for Development , FGC
Sarah Kennedy, Friends Committee on National Legislation
Allison Kirkegaard, Pacific Yearly Meeting
Nils Klinkenberg, Beacon Hill Friends House
Eric Kristensen, Vancouver Monthly Meeting, Canadian Yearly Meeting
Ramon Longoria, Gibara Monthly Meeting, Cuba Yearly Meeting
Laura MacNorlin, Atlanta Friends Meeting, (SAYMA)
Amanda Mayer, Friends Meeting of Washington, Baltimore Yearly Meeting
Robin Mohr, Secretary of the Section of Americas, FWCC
Judith M'maitsi Nandikove, Danholm Monthly Meeting, Nairobi Yearly Meeting
Lisa Parker, Medford, MA
Yadira Cruz Pena; Pastor, Velasco Monthly Meeting, Cuba Yearly Meeting
Julie Peyton, West Hills Friends, Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting
Anne Pomeroy, New Paltz Monthly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting
Noel Potter, York Springs, PA, Agnostic/Episcopalian community
Cai Quirk, Ithaca Monthly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting
Diane Randall, Friends Committee on National Legislation
Karen Reixach, New York Yearly Meeting

Tom Roberts, Noblesville Monthly Meeting, Western Yearly Meeting

Gale Schultz, East African Women's Ministry, USA Support Group

Jacqueline Stillwell, Mondanock, Right Sharing of World Resources

Gloria Thompson, Northeast coordinator, FWCC

Steven Willett, Manchester & Warrington Area Meeting, Britain Yearly Meeting

Pamela Williams, Germantown Monthly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

Liz Yeats, Friends Meeting of Austin, South Central Yearly Meeting

1.6 Clerks' Introduction to the week

The presiding clerk noted that in keeping with our ongoing connection with Cuba Yearly Meeting, we will have three visitors from Cuba with us during the course of the week: Ramon Gonzalez Longoria from Gibara MM, Yadira Cruz Pena, pastor of Velasco MM and Elsa de los Reyes Alvarez, secretary of Vista Alegre MM. The clerk acknowledged the effect of the pandemic on us, and the grief for lost opportunities and old norms. This week, through the voices we hear and the work that we do, he suggests we move from grief to engagement with establishing new norms, where each of God's children is loved and respected and treated with dignity. He invited us to bring our full selves to this work. We have turned over our usual business meetings to an exploration of how we are led to join a rising tide of intolerance for racial injustice. We are all challenged to create the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Sessions Committee clerk and clerk of the online Sessions planning team Rebecca Leuchak (Providence) welcomed us to the 2020 NEYM Sessions, with an especially warm welcome to newcomers and those who are juggling everyday responsibilities and joining us as able and to long time attenders. We feel joy and sorrow and we will mourn the loss of some wonderful traditions here at Sessions, but together we will strengthen our bonds.

Youth and youth staff were sent off to their own adventures to a rendition of *Row On* sung by Rebecca Leuchak and Bill Monroe (Providence).

1.7 Reflections from the Yearly Meeting Secretary

After two songs by Eden and Jim Grace (Beacon Hill), we settled into worship. Out of the silence Yearly Meeting Secretary Noah Merrill invited us to transformation.

“There is only one meeting for worship,” he said, “and we gather there in eternity. It is available to all who open their hearts, we emerge from it at birth and return to it in death, and across the miles we are participating in it now.”

The early Quakers discovered something hidden in plain sight--a world-transforming power waiting within every heart. As they yielded to it, they were transformed, becoming clearer channels of love and Truth. They spoke of three movements within this transformation, which in the language of their time they called conviction, convincement, and conversion. Today we may call them revealing, surrender, and turning.

Some Friends may experience the moment of revealing as being shown the impact of our own choices, or of how we participate in oppression. Others may find themselves brought to a renewed assurance of how we and each of our fellow beings are infinitely beloved.

Surrender, for Quakers, means giving over, not giving up. We let go of trying to save the world through our own action, and instead learn to participate in the healing of creation which is already underway.

Turning means putting into practice the invitation to love again and again in our lives. Only we can choose to be faithful, but in these moments we may encourage and strengthen one another.

Supporting one another in revealing, surrender, and turning is the essential purpose of the Quaker movement. It is the purpose for which NEYM was gathered 360 years ago and it is the purpose for which we gather now. “We come here with many different conditions, hopes, and burdens. I cannot speak to all conditions but there is a Spirit who can, and this is the Spirit who welcomes you here today.”

1.8 Closing

Rebecca Leuchak completed our morning with a quote from our own epistle of 2019 which read “There is a tide in the affairs of men / which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.” She noted how this quote leads us directly into this year’s theme in relation to the work ahead of us. She outlined the schedule for the week, which includes a tightly focused meeting for business, and she encouraged us to take the Wednesday Sabbath as a time to step away from the affairs of the world.

Kristina Keefe-Perry (Fresh Pond) read a poem to lead us into a brief closing worship.

Saturday afternoon August 1, 2020

2.1 Opening Worship

From out of the silence, we heard the June 2019 epistle from Great Plains Yearly Meeting in Wichita, Kansas. They reported that after 30 years of discernment they adopted a “statement of inclusion” recognizing that “God calls us to love one another as God loves us” and affirming that “all people are invited to fully participate in the life of the yearly meeting.” The keynote speaker at their gathering, John Calvi (Putney, NEYM), spoke of Friends' call to service in the world and counseled “we want to be doing our best, not our most.”

2.2 Welcome to Business Sessions

The presiding clerk welcomed us and thanked everyone for coming. As we are meeting virtually for the first time, he asked the reading clerks to guide us through good Zoom disciplines designed to facilitate our virtual conversations. He noted that business is likely to move more slowly than usual, as we are unfamiliar with this setting. Please be forgiving of each other, and remember that even though we are at home, we are in holy space for the duration of Sessions.

2.3 Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness

Polly Atwood (Cambridge) introduced the work of this group. She began by introducing the other members of the group: LJ Boswell (Cambridge), Melody Brazo (Fresh Pond), Melissa Foster (Framingham), Lisa Graustein (Beacon Hill), Becky Jones (Northampton), Anna Lindo (Framingham), Richard Lindo (Framingham), Heidi Nortonsmith (Northampton), L V M Shelton (Plainfield), Pamela Terrien (Westport), Maille Wooten (Fresh Pond), and Zenaida Peterson (Cambridge). The group lifts up the deep faithfulness of those who are here today. They seek to do their work from Spirit, in love, with honesty and compassion.

The group invited Friends to stay connected to feelings and thoughts that arise, to resist reacting out of that place and to embrace this learning. Even when it is uncomfortable at times, this work will strengthen NEYM as a beloved community. The group offered sentence stems—*I hear, I see, I feel, I know* (in deep heart sense, not just head), and *I wonder*—as a beginning for this work. All Friends were invited

to share what they are hearing, seeing, feeling, knowing and wondering, as well as questions, via a dedicated email address. The working group will distill themes and report these back to the body as a whole.

2.4 Epistle from the FGC Pre-Gathering of People of Color

The clerk asked LVM Shelton (Plainfield) to read the Epistle from the June 2020 FGC Pre-Gathering of People of Color.

This was the eighth year that Friends of Color and their families met for a Pre-Gathering Retreat before the Friends General Conference gathering. This year's retreat was held virtually. The importance of this Gathering for Friends of Color cannot be overstated. Friends of Color can't breathe in the wider Quaker world, and the weekend presented a rare opportunity for not being othered In Quaker space.

In isolation due to COVID-19, Friends of Color have been kept apart from trusted loved ones and the pre-gathering retreat brought back the source of community and family that has been missing. The Pre-Gathering Friends of Color Retreat provided a much-needed reprieve from the systemic racism too often found in our American Quaker community that often goes unseen by many white Friends.

Friends of Color ask all Quakers to heed a Call to Action and to sit with a list of queries. To the list of queries from the epistle, LVM herself added the following queries:

Where and how do you find *yourself in* those you have othered, marginalized, or erased?

Where and how do you find those you have othered, marginalized, or erased *in yourself*?

“For People of Color,” she said, “the human-made pandemic of racism is deadlier than COVID19, and we need you to do work so that we can *breathe*.”

Friends then went into Zoom breakout rooms for worship sharing around the queries.

(See the letter and the queries on page ____)

2.5 Voices of those answering God's call

Throughout the week we heard from Friends involved in justice work in response to spiritual leadings. Their presentations invited us to listen more to our own sense of God's leading. Many of these Friends shared resources.

The clerk introduced Zenaida Peterson (Cambridge). Zenaida spoke about their justice work as recruitment coordinator for Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS), with Boston Community Wellness, and with the Feminine Empowerment Movement (FEM). Their mutual aid work involves helping people find resources like food, diapers, and masks, as well as disseminating information to help people prepare for participation in uprisings. Slam poetry has also been part of their artistic and emotional support to the community.

2.6 Noticing Patterns

The following were patterns lifted up today by attenders at Sessions:

- When the message regarding native lands was delivered, it assumed all of us were white/European.
- When people share their pronouns, it may be helpful to enter all of the forms including the possessive, since there are some designations unfamiliar to many of us.
- It is easy to use the word "should," but that word brings a sense of judging, whereas saying "I encourage" invites exploration.
- The time we were given for digging into the queries was appreciated, but dealing with these queries is lifelong work, and we are encouraged not to feel limited to the time we had.
- The clerk was noticed for the gracefulness with which he owned "mistakes" that were noticed in sessions.
- All those serving on the Pastoral Care team are white women; there may be people who don't feel that group reflects their needs.
- We keep using the term "mistake;" what is needed is to relearn patterns.
- But we also need to not only change our use of words, but change our actions.

Tuesday morning August 4, 2020

3.1 Opening Worship

Out of the opening silence the November 2019 epistle from Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting, in Ghent, Belgium was read. The chosen themes of their Yearly Meeting were “Living adventurously” and “Trusting the Light in our daily lives”.

“We need to learn to be brave, to take our Quakerism out to the wider world trusting we can come back to the Quaker community for replenishment.

“We should remember that being led by the Light may not feel comfortable. What is important is the path, and to always remember that we ourselves might be mistaken, for example in the failure of Friends to adequately address issues such as gender, racial and sexual orientation equality. Things start to change with that discomfort; we grow to no longer be the person we were before the change began.”

3.2 Noticings

LJ Boswell and Melissa Foster of the Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness working group shared patterns of oppression and of faithfulness that have been seen in our work this week. Friends’ language has continued to center whiteness; we find that we speak with a sense of urgency to be heard and understood that is characteristic of the dominant culture; we often use “we” and “us” as if all of us shared the same experiences. Also noticed were ways we have been faithful in our efforts to break this pattern. Our clerk modeled a willingness to experiment with different language and to ask for help with that, and members of the dominant culture were seen to step back so that others could be heard.

Perfectionism is part of the culture of oppression, and we have shown our perfectionism in some of the ways we call out patterns we notice, shaming one another for our mistakes. Melissa reminded us of something LVM Shelton said: “I hope I can be glad of each mistake I make: it is a lesson to be learned. It keeps me green and growing. When I stop making mistakes, I have stopped practicing. I am in ashes and the winds will blow me away into nothingness.”

3.3 State of Society Report

LVM Shelton (Plainfield), Susan Vargo (Northampton), and Richard Lindo (Framingham), members of Ministry & Counsel, presented a State of Society report for the Yearly Meeting.

The Yearly Meeting received State of Society reports from monthly meetings early this year. Most of them were written in the pre-COVID days and all were written before the release of widely seen and distressing video showing the May 25th murder by police in Minneapolis, MN, of George Floyd, a Black man. The Friends preparing NEYM's State of Society report felt called to focus on what is in our hearts now more than on synthesizing reports from monthly meetings. Because of the pandemic, the report presented to Sessions has not yet been approved by Ministry & Council.

The committee told us "The reports received from monthly meetings only hint at the wounding many Quakers, of various abilities, genders, ethnicities, affectional preferences, and social classes feel, enthralled as we are by our culture of control and domination, which we have learned to call Empire.

"The Empire we are immersed in is a culture where the few have power over the many. In spite of Quaker values and the most righteous of intentions, Empire is manifest within almost all of us...

"To change the world, we of NEYM must also transform ourselves. Those of us who are Euro-Americans, must let die that white privilege and power that adds to the armor around our hearts. Those of us who are people of color must let go the armor of victimhood that surrounds many of our hearts.

"If we are to transform ourselves and the world, we must be ready to say 'Here I am' when leadings of spirit come to us. If we accept the challenge and enter the chrysalis state, if we cast off the clothing of Empire, we become willing to let go of whatever does not serve the butterflies we are to become."

Friends received this report and discussed queries presented for individual transformation in breakout rooms.

(See the report and the queries on page ____)

3.4 Reparations Working Group: *NEYM Letter of Apology to Native Americans*

Leslie Manning (Durham), clerk of Permanent Board introduced the documents coming before us from the Reparations Working Group: a letter of apology to the indigenous peoples of our geographic area, and a call to action which is intended to serve as a starting point for monthly meetings' consideration. Friends were asked to approve forwarding the *NEYM Letter of Apology to Native Americans* to monthly meetings for seasoning over the coming year, so that it can come back to Sessions next year for further consideration.

To help center us before our work, we heard a video by Hawk Henries, a flute player from the Nipmuck tribe. Leslie reviewed the history of the Reparations Working Group, which was formed in 2019 after we repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery during our 2013 annual sessions [2013-52]. The working group is composed of Leslie Manning, Erica Adams (W. Falmouth Preparative), Maggie Edmondson (Winthrop), Charles Simpson (Burlington), and Suzannah Schell (Beacon Hill).

Leslie then read a text from Sheri Mitchell of the Penobscot tribe: "Walking a spiritual path does not equate to perfectionism. It requires a willingness to deeply accept the imperfections within yourself and others and find the beauty in them. It also means being accountable for your words and actions and developing a healthy and balanced response-ability when you are wrong or when you cause harm."

In listening to native Americans, what the working group has heard is, "Tell your people we are still here. Tell your people we need to heal. We must concentrate on our people, reclaiming our culture and language, saving our youth, healing the planet. We have no reason to trust, but some of us are willing. How can we re-concile when there has never been conciliation?" We have been asked for an apology. This work is not finished and may never be finished.

Suzanna Schell (Beacon Hill) read the draft apology and asked us to sit with it in silence. (See the letter of apology on page ____)

After thoughtful reflection and appreciation, Friends approved forwarding the letter of apology to monthly meetings, along with materials to support the discernment process. Contact information will be provided where Friends may share information and suggestions. The clerk postponed consideration of *A Call For Us to Act* until the next business session.

Thursday morning August 6, 2020

4.1 Opening Worship

From out of the silence, the reading clerk read a reflection from Ian Harrington (Cambridge) reminding us that 75 years ago today the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan and three days later another bomb on Nagasaki, Japan. “On this 75th anniversary of such disaster and destruction, let us hold in the Light those who bore the impact of that long ago explosion and those who, over the past 75 years and in the future, are dedicating their lives to preventing any more cataclysmic explosions.”

4.2 Change to process for approving minutes for this sessions

Recognizing our limited time for conducting business during these virtual Sessions, the clerk asked for permission to forward to Permanent Board for approval those minutes that do not reflect decisions by the body, but rather are summaries of reports received. Friends approved.

4.3 Finance Committee: Budget

Bob Murray (Beacon Hill), clerk of the Finance Committee, reported on changes to this year’s budget process. Consideration of the budget for fiscal year 2020-21 is being postponed this year until the Permanent Board meeting on September 19. The budget, along with explanatory text, is in the advance documents. The listening session around the budget that is usually held at Sessions will be held on Zoom on Saturday, August 29, at 10 a.m. Any interested Friends are invited to participate. As Bob has been approved as the new NEYM treasurer, Scot Drysdale, the incoming clerk of finance, will host that session.

4.4 Voices of those answering God's call

Continuing to hear from some Yearly Meeting members active in justice work we heard from the following people:

Diane Randall (Hartford), General Secretary of FCNL

After encouraging robust participation in the election process, Diane outlined three areas of federal advocacy FCNL is focusing on right now.

1) The Justice in Policing Act: FCNL's focus has been on the section addressing the militarization of the police. This legislation won't solve all policing issues by itself. We need coordinating efforts at the local level.

2) The most recent COVID relief bill: The impact of the pandemic in terms of economic fallout will last long past the development of a vaccine. This bill proposes increases to SNAP and the extension of unemployment benefits.

3) Native American work: FCNL has a full time Native American congressional advocate working on issues relating to missing and murdered native women and tribal justice with the Violence Against Women Act.

Diane emphasized the effectiveness of forming contacts and relationships with our congresspeople.

At the end of Diane's presentation, the clerk shared that he hears a longing among some Friends for a focused piece of work for the Yearly Meeting as a whole to take up. He noted that while such an effort has not emerged, FCNL provides many opportunities for individual justice work.

Lori Martin (New Haven), Coordinator of Haven's Harvest

Lori shared that this ministry began when she encouraged her son, home from college, to get involved in something meaningful. As her son engaged in this work, Lori felt Spirit drawing her into it as well.

Haven's Harvest is a local nonprofit that recovers surplus food from area businesses and transfers it to nonprofits that can store and distribute it to those in need. Communities experiencing food insecurity are often Black and brown due to systemic racism and policies around immigration.

Part of Haven's Harvest work is advocacy for policies that reduce the need for this type of service. The work is friendly and neighborly--not charity work, but rather

solidarity. “We all work together. We recover food, but we also create relationships. We are able to connect people with each other.”

4.5 Reparations Working Group: *A Call for Us to Act*

Maggie Edmondson (Winthrop) spoke about the work of decolonizing faith, and decolonizing Quakers in particular. Working toward right relationship with Native Americans is one aspect of work around the racism, domination, exploitation, superiority, and individualism that fosters disconnection from one another and the earth. Knowledge of this continent’s history through lenses other than that of the settlers is important. Churches must look at how they have benefited from colonialism. We must examine structures of communities of faith to see how they continue oppression.

After a conference at Pendle Hill, Maggie had a leading to create a new Quaker organization, Decolonizing Quakers, that would connect Friends in whom this concern is alive. (decolonizingquakers.org) Its website has resources for nonindigenous Friends as we work for change.

The clerk then introduced *A Call for Us to Act*, produced by the Reparations Working Group as a companion document to the *NEYM Apology to Native Americans*, noting that it is meant to suggest tools which the monthly meetings could use to engage with the reparations concern. The list of actions is neither a list of things meetings *should* do, nor a requirement - simply a beginning resource to help us educate ourselves. Charles Simpson (Burlington) read *A Call for Us to Act* for the Reparations Working Group. (See the [Call for us to Act on page ___](#))

Friends expressed overall support for *A Call for Us to Act*, but several concerns were expressed.

A Friend pointed out that the recommendations in the document do not mention looking at the history of the land owned by the Yearly Meeting itself. This Friend also questioned the appropriateness of using Legacy Gift funds to investigate reparations, when these funds may derive in part from stolen land.

Another pointed out that issues involving Native Americans are confusing to white people. She also asked, is it contrary to Quaker testimonies to support the

sovereignty of Native Americans over their lands if they use those lands to build gambling casinos?

A Friend expressed concern that European Americans can be too quick in rushing to make things happen, and there should be an added note of humility. Perhaps instead of *A Call for Us to Act*, it should be called *A Call to Faithful Response*.

A number of voices highlighted that we are in many different stages of our work in understanding our history and current relationships with native peoples. While one Friend believed that establishing relationships with native people should happen before placing a plaque in their meeting house, another cautioned that we must approach Native peoples in humility, recognizing that we cannot expect that Native peoples will accept our overtures.

One Friend, identifying herself as mixed blood Cherokee/Irish, applauded the effort to move forward in our imperfections, as Sherri Mitchell said.

Sensing general approval, the clerk suggested that we allow the reparations working group to edit the “Call to action” based on the comments heard in this meeting, and forward that document, together with the letter of apology, to Monthly Meetings for engagement with the concern. A number of friends expressed discomfort with that path. Seeing many hands still raised, and recognizing that we had already gone well over our allotted time, the clerk named that we did not have unity, and closed the meeting.

Friday morning August 7, 2020

5.1 Opening Worship

Meeting was opened by a reading of the October 2019 epistle from France Yearly Meeting. Their theme was “the Quaker method in support of action.”

“We continued further to question not only our witness but our methods: the means we use to discern ‘what love demands of us,’ and how that translates into action. We heard many stories of Quaker activity, and remembered how an action in the name of our society starts as a ‘concern’ from a member or small group, and not from an institutional decision.

“We were reminded in various ways that in fact our greatest witness is always our own lives. We shared how the Quaker ‘method’ leads to a style and a discipline in our behaviour, both in daily life and in our Meeting. Despite sometimes questioning the number of working groups and committees, and being sometimes frustrated by the slowness of the method, we know how this leads to unity and dedication.”

5.2 Opening Prayer

The clerk opened today’s session with a prayer:

Dear God, you have brought us together.

Please help us to hear what it is you would have us do.

5.3 Video greetings from our Cuban friends

Yadira Cruz Peña, pastor of Velasco Monthly Meeting, Cuba Yearly Meeting, greeted us with a song sung by the women’s group of Velasco.

*There are moments that words cannot reach to tell you how I feel,
for you my good Lord;*

*I thank you for everything you've done,
for everything you do and for all that you will do.*

5.4 Clerk’s reflection on Thursday’s business meeting

The Presiding Clerk shared some reflections on our difficulty in finding unity to approve the “Call to action” associated with the Letter of Apology to Native Americans. He sensed that there were multiple factors contributing to the dis-ease the body experienced. These included a fear of the unknown as we enter into this work; discomfort, for those of us who identify as white, with the deeds of our spiritual forebears; and an underlying emotional charge from the Pandemic.

Adding to the complexity of the situation is our longing to *do something*, balanced by voices naming the need to be respectful and humble in our relationships with Native peoples.

The clerk further shared his thoughts about how much we Quakers are influenced by the wider society. One way that plays out is an attachment to outcome, “and that played out in myself yesterday. Part of my frustration at the end of yesterday’s meeting was that I had an attachment to an outcome that wasn’t happening. I acknowledge and apologize for that.”

5.5 Noticing Patterns

Polly Atwood and Anna Lindo of the Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness Working Group brought to us reflections that have come from the whole body. The Noticing Patterns email box received many noticings both of faithfulness and oppression. We sense a growing trust and willingness to engage with this work. Friends are taking risks.

Concerning Thursday’s business meeting: We followed patterns of faithfulness. We laid aside old things to make space for Spirit, agreeing, for instance, to let Permanent Board approve minutes that do not involve decisions of the body. We listened deeply to Friends who spoke of their ministries in various contexts. With joy and ease, we approved forwarding the *NEYM Letter of Apology to Native Americans* to monthly meetings.

There were also times when, having been stretched into this faithfulness, we felt the temptation to contract back into what felt safe--to slide back into patterns of oppression. We found ourselves overly engaged with words and details, not listening to Spirit moving among us. At times these patterns hindered the process of discernment.

Empire within us takes the form of us not listening, seeking control, forgetting our trust in each other and in our committees, prioritizing our own individual voices over the voices of others, speaking without fully attending to what has already been said, assuming an apology is a single act or letter, weaponizing a need to reach consensus, and feeling the tyranny of time rather than surrendering to God’s time.

QUERIES From the Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness Working Group:

What are you noticing in yourself during Business, or maybe in other parts of Sessions? We invite you to use the sentence stems to practice noticing what's coming up for you: I feel.... I see ... I hear ... I know (in heart/body, not just head) I wonder

When do you notice -- in your body, feelings, thoughts -- a temptation to react, to resist, or to stop listening to others and Spirit?

What do you fear will happen if some business item, or aspect of an item, is not done just so?

When do you feel yourself listening deeply? What do you notice when you are in that place? What supports you to stay with that deeper listening?

Can those gathered in Meeting for Business trust that discernment will come in the time it takes, and that whatever gets done, gets done?

5.6 Voices of those answering God's call

We have been referring to these presentations as the voices of people doing Justice work, but really they are an invitation to see the myriad of ways that people hear God's call.

Emma Turcotte (Beacon Hill) - 2018-19 QVS Fellow

"Since Covid started, I began thinking about how to continue antiracism work. After George Floyd's murder I started a Facebook group for Earlham alumni POC, since my introduction to activism began at Earlham and I wanted to recreate virtually the community I had at Earlham where students of color could have a space to advocate and stand in solidarity with one another. I also started Abolition Journals' free six-week study guide titled "If You're New To Abolition" and began a free online course offered by Yale: *African American History from Emancipation to the Present*. Both of these are excellent resources and both are things that I am doing with friends in order to hold myself accountable to doing this work."

“In addition, I read and downloaded from the web many articles to share with friends and family. I watch documentaries , which several sites have been showing for free lately. I started buying directly from black-owned businesses, and found the only black-owned bookstore in Boston (Frugal Bookstore, frugalbookstore.net). I am more intentional now about where my money goes and believe that the most radical thing you can do today is buy a book by a black author about the black experience from a black owned bookstore.”

Emma included in the chat a link to an extensive list of racial justice resources she thought others might find helpful.

5.7 Earthcare Ministry and the Racial, Social and Economic Justice Committee: *Call to Urgent, Loving Action for Earth and Her Inhabitants*

Steve Gates and Gail Melix, who identified herself as a Wampanoag Quaker, co-clerks of Earthcare Ministry, along with Beth Morrill, clerk of Racial, Social, and Economic Justice, and other members of the committees read their *Call to Urgent, Loving Action for The Earth and Her Inhabitants* in a video presentation.

The call asks, “At this critical time, the Earthcare Ministry and the Racial, Social and Economic Justice Committees invite Friends to a year of spiritual and intellectual discernment regarding social injustice, including racism and the plight of Mother Earth.” The Call asks monthly meetings to discern actions that can be taken at the monthly meeting and yearly meeting levels.

See the “[Call to Urgent, Loving Action for Earth and Her inhabitants on p. __](#)”

Friends approved sending the Call to monthly meetings, affirming that there is power in this message.

Saturday morning August 8, 2020

6.1 Opening Worship

From out of the silence we heard a portion of the 2019 epistle from Alaska Friends Conference in Wasilla, Alaska. “Love, Joy, and Empowerment” was their

theme, formulated in response to concerns of young Friends for more meaningful and effective integration of youth and young adult Friends into the life of the Meeting.

“Alaska Friends are keenly aware of and concerned about visible and destructive consequences of climate disruption: We noted ongoing constructive work of Alaska Friends to raise awareness of and counter climate disruption. We urge Friends everywhere to join this vital spirit-led work to defend creation.

“Alaska Friends ask all people of good will to join with us in countering racist and divisive words and actions. We have asked ourselves how our own Quaker history has contributed to divisions, intolerance, and white supremacy. We discern a need for healing work that confronts past actions including those of Friends that devalued and damaged indigenous cultures.”

6.2 Welcome to new members of our families

The Clerk invited Friends to introduce to us new babies and other young people newly welcomed home.

6.3 Video greetings from our Cuban friends

Jorge Luis Peña Reyes, Clerk Of Cuba Yearly Meeting, passed on greetings from all the members of Cuba Yearly Meeting and noted that “We’re making a documentary video on the 120-year presence of Quakers in Cuba, scheduled to be shown on state television this fall. It will feature some of the Quaker leadership and the Quaker churches here in Cuba. It will include a section about our long connection with New England Friends by way of the Puente de Amigos—the Bridge of Love.”

Elsa De Los Reyes, Secretary Of Vista Alegre Monthly Meeting greeted us with Psalm 133, which epitomizes the bonds that unite us: “It is truly wonderful when relatives live together in peace.

“How wonderful to be in touch with Friends in New England! Thanks be to God! For even though we can’t be together physically, we can still be united in Spirit

with all of you. I want to send you loving and cordial greetings on behalf of my monthly meeting.”

The Clerk thanked the interpreters who brought these words to us and shared our words with our Cuban and El Salvadorian Friends: Mary Hopkins (Fresh Pond), Judy Goldberger (Beacon Hill), David Currie (Amesbury), Iliana Matamouros (Framingham), Susanna McCandless (Burlington), James Rider (Mattapoissett), Russell Weiss-Irwin (Cambridge).

6.4 Minute to Authorize Edits and Corrections

Friends approved authorizing the Presiding, Recording, and Reading Clerks to make and approve edits, clarifications and corrections to the minutes of NEYM Sessions 2020.

6.5 Clerks’ Table nominations

Leslie Manning from Permanent Board brought to us for approval new nominations for Clerks’ table for the coming year:

Bruce Neumann (Fresh Pond), Presiding Clerk
Gina Nortonsmith (Northampton), Reading Clerk
Gordon Peters (Wellesley), Reading Clerk
Peter Bishop (Northampton), Recording Clerk
Kathleen Malin (Smithfield), Recording Clerk

Friends approved.

6.6 Report from the Working Group on Ministry & Spiritual Life

On behalf of Permanent Board, Leslie Manning reported that in December 2019 a Ministry & Spiritual Life Working Group was formed in response to

observations in the Clerking Structures and Practices Working Group report presented at 2019 Sessions. This new working group, consisting of Sarah Gant (Beacon Hill), Hugh McArthur (Hanover), Nancy Middleton (Putney), and Phil Fitz (Northampton), was asked to explore where and how support is currently happening amongst us and to recommend roles and structures to best serve the current needs of our beloved community. They expected to prepare a document to circulate to meetings before coming back to us at this year's sessions with recommendations. As a result of the pandemic, in March they were clear as a Working Group to lay aside their work for a time because the people they hoped to consult with were busy caring for our monthly meetings in this time of uncertainty. The group is now clear to resume that work and we look forward to receiving their report some time this fall at a Permanent Board meeting. Friends expressed gratitude for their work.

6.7 Appreciation for Honor Woodrow's work as clerk of Ministry & Council

Leslie Manning offered appreciation to the outgoing clerk of M&C, Honor Woodrow, a member of Framingham sojourning with Friends at Putney. Even at the best of times, serving in a leadership position in the Yearly Meeting is challenging and stretching, but at a time of uncertainty this has been an increasingly challenging task. And yet our dear F/friend has risen to that to the best of her abilities and sometimes, through grace, beyond. Honor brings us compassion, deep love for our community, and a capacity for deep listening that can cause her at times to sit in places of discomfort and dis-ease, and name hard truths, with love and compassion.

Her gifts have let her prioritize the needs of monthly meetings in discord and distress and to help them find their way through. She has made a commitment to enable our meetings to flourish and has spent much time helping us become the including and welcoming community we imagine ourselves to be. She has served us well and faithfully and we are so grateful for that service.

The clerk spoke to his appreciation of Honor's participation in Coordinating and Advisory.

6.8 Appreciation for Shearman Taber's work as treasurer

Frederick Martin (Beacon Hill), accounts manager for NEYM, noted that the treasurer's job is a complicated combination of delving into the numbers, giving the overview of everything, and relating that overview to everyone. Shearman has done a wonderful job with the combination. It goes without saying that he served with integrity and commitment but he also found areas where his unique abilities could simplify and improve our financial analysis. He has evidenced a passionate concern for equity as well, especially on the Board of Managers.

Noah Merrill (Putney), Yearly Meeting secretary, reflected on Shearman's long history of service. He was a member, then clerk, of Finance Committee, then treasurer of our Yearly Meeting. At the time he became treasurer we were facing a structural budget deficit and there was real pressure to focus on our financial viability at the expense of our ministry. Shearman helped guide us in our financial stewardship while also reminding us that that stewardship is only ever in service of our spiritual calling.

Noah noted "I hope that Shearman is the last treasurer of whom we ask so much, as we focus on removing barriers to participation by changing the responsibilities of the job. It is no accident that the work of the clerk of Ministry & Counsel and the treasurer were the two roles that were focused on last year as needing attention to make them more accessible."

6.9 Voices of those answering God's call

Anna Lindo (Framingham): Reflection on a deeper understanding of nonviolence

Nonviolence is an important part of Quaker values and always has been. Anna quoted Coretta Scott King, who said: "I must remind you that starving a child is violence. Neglecting school children is violence. Punishing a mother and her family is violence. Discrimination against a working man is violence. Ghetto housing is violence. Ignoring medical need is violence. Contempt for poverty is violence." Anna spoke to her experience concerning that definition of violence in schools.

"In 2016 I participated in City Year Boston, where I was placed in an underfunded school. I was assigned to work with a classroom teacher who needed to retire. She would take attendance, pass out a resource or worksheet, and then

ignore the class for hours on her phone. It got loud and she would yell at the loud Black girls and ADHD boys. The teacher said the real problem was that the parents were crackheads.

"Trump was elected that fall, and it was a terrifying time for the students, especially from immigrant families. A lot of the fear was related to families being split up by deportation. I am very lucky that none of my students or their immediate families got deported, but the fear kept everybody on edge. Separating families is violence.

"My liberal white friends say they only support nonviolent protests. Barrington Dunbar, 20th century Black Quaker anti-racist activist, said 'Black people living in the ghettos of American cities ... cannot hear Friends who profess the way of love and nonviolence, but yet maintain a destructive silence in obvious situations of social injustice.' So, what do we mean by 'I only support nonviolence?' Is it that we are uncomfortable watching buildings burn? Or does it mean that we are unwilling to oppose systemic violence? So I ask, what are you willing to do? I encourage us to sit with this question and let Spirit help guide us to find the answer."

Heather Denkmire (Portland): Racial Justice Accountability Groups

"I grew up believing I was one of the good white people. My dad was a minister in a Black neighborhood. I always considered myself as an activist. It was important to me at the time to see myself as not part of the problem. Then I began having a friendship with a woman who was Black. Class and race made the friendship bumpy, but I was writing a newspaper column at that time and one column that I wrote ended our friendship. Being a racist doesn't make me a bad person; my job is to undo it. I must call on God to relieve some of the fear, and be able to act before I feel ready.

"I took a racism class on 'What does it mean to be white in America?' Lisa Graustien shared a document about white supremacy culture, and that is my touchstone now. Things I needed to do for the class started falling off the calendar because I was busy, so I started asking other white people if they wanted to have a monthly check-in group. It's not a book club, but once a month we get together and each of us checks in and says 'This is what I've been doing in my antiracism work and this is what I plan to do this next month.'

"Things slide. I'm not going to bite off more than I can chew, but I'll leave my comfort zone. Sometimes I want to fix everything and there is this tension

between urgency and inaction. My whiteness tells me ‘You don’t have to do so much’ *and* it tells me ‘you have to do it now!’ We can’t just say we mean well; we need to start doing well.”

6.10 Noticing Patterns

Becky Jones, a member of the Noticing Patterns group, has noticed a pattern that around midweek, business sessions often get bogged down, but later in the week there is more of a feeling of openness. We have seen that this week.

She sees ways that we have been cracked open many times this week, and wonders if we might now be willing to trust the Reparations Working Group to hear what Friends have said about *A Call For Us to Act* and, having heard it, to create a document that we agree with in spirit that can go out to monthly meetings along with the NEYM Letter of Apology to Native Americans so that these two documents can go hand in hand.

The clerk noted that we do not have time to enter into discussion of this, but asked if Friends are ready to approve it.

Friends approved.

6.11 First Reading of our Epistle

We heard a first reading of the epistle for this year’s Sessions from Jay O’Hara (West Falmouth), Briana Halliwell (Vassalboro), and Debbie Humphries (Hartford) and were asked for feedback. Friends were invited to send comments via e-mail.

6.12 Closing Worship

We concluded our business with a moment of worship and celebration.

“Thank you for gathering us and shepherding us to a new place.”

Sunday morning August 9, 2020
Closing Celebration

7.1 Opening Worship

As we entered the virtual space, the slideshow of photos from meetings around New England was once again in progress. After a song from Annie and Peter Blood-Patterson (*Paz y Libertad en Este Mundo* [“We want peace and liberty in this world”]) we settled in for opening worship.

7.2 Report from Events Coordinator

Elizabeth Hacala, events coordinator, began by observing that a strong and vibrant team is stronger than the sum of their parts. It’s not a singer with backup, it’s a symphony.

She presented some statistics from this week’s gathering: 700 Friends registered for sessions. There was an average of 240 connections per event, with over 400 online for the plenary. The largest group participating together remotely was fifteen. Twenty percent of registrants were first time attenders. Twelve people joined us by phone. Nearly 300 attenders participated in home groups. Our participants included 19 Young Friends, 25 from Junior High Yearly Meeting, 26 in Junior Yearly Meeting, and 11 very young children. Faithfully financing NEYM through our “pay as led” option continued to ensure that cost is not a barrier to session attendance. We are grateful that you are here.

Elizabeth closed with a quote from the TV show *Babylon Five*: “The molecules of your body are the same molecules that make up ... the stars themselves. We are starstuff. We are the universe made manifest, trying to figure itself out. And as we have learned, sometimes the universe requires a change of perspective.”

7.3 Home Group Reflection

Holly Baldwin (Fresh Pond), who coordinated support for Home Group Facilitators, began with a quote from Ross Gay's *The Book of Delights*:

What if we joined our wildernesses together? ...

Is sorrow the true wild?

What if we joined our sorrows, I'm saying.

I'm saying: what if that is joy?

For many this year, home groups were a space where sorrows were joined together in a nurturing environment, and out of the wilderness, joy was created. Friends shared griefs, listened for leadings, and processed what they had heard in the plenary, bible half hours, and business meeting agenda items. Friends grieved not gathering in person and found comfort and inspiration in these small group spaces, along with opportunities for intimacy, although the closeness of the groups was challenging for some and home groups were not safe spaces for everyone.

Fifty five Friends acted as facilitators for twenty different home groups in which Friends were able to listen, dwell, and grow in the Spirit. In training these facilitators, as a yearly meeting we deepened our skills and practice in creating spaces where braveness and vulnerability thrive, and where we notice and interrupt patterns of oppression. Through the week home groups worked through themes of

- Connection & Community Building
- Sharing Spiritual Conditions
- Listening for How Spirit is Calling/God's Invitation
- Witness

We are learning and growing and that is good. Part of learning and growing is practicing, and part of practicing is making mistakes. Mistakes that come at the expense of some Friends.

Some Friends reported experiences of othering and microaggressions in their home groups, that were either inadequately addressed or caused by facilitators. In some cases a participant hurt by the pattern chose not to return to the homegroup, and, in the cases we know about, Friends had the option to join new groups. "To

Friends wounded in home groups this week, we apologize for the pains we caused you in spaces that were supposed to hold you.”

7.4 Reading of the Epistle

Jay O’Hara, Briana Halliwell, and Debbie Humphries read the NEYM epistle for our 2020 Sessions.

With appreciation for those who worked on it, Friends approved this reflection on our condition and our work together. (See the epistle on page ___)

7.5 Message from the Presiding Clerk

The Presiding clerk expressed his gratitude for the planning that went into our “big experiment” of holding Sessions online, along with appreciation for all of us who have participated.

He noted that while there were some who were able to attend *because* we were on Zoom, others stayed away due either to an inadequate internet connection or discomfort with the technology.

He shared that the various parts of Sessions this year felt all of a piece, from the opening celebration through Dr. Kemp’s plenary, through Bible half hours, business meeting, and home groups.

In business meeting three different documents that came to us used the phrase “Call to Action.” One was from the People of Color Pre-Gathering at Friends General Conference, asking Friends who identify as white to engage in reflection and action about the racial pandemic. One was from the reparations working group, encouraging Friends to learn more about Native Americans and to work on their behalf. And the last being a wider appeal for justice for people, for the earth and for the people who suffer most from climate degradation.

Indeed, the decay of the environment, the spread of a pandemic which has laid bare the inequalities many of us have turned a blind eye to for years, and the constancy of police violence have created in many of us an awareness that our complacency has festered for too long. The clerk asked the question that was on many of our hearts: Is it time for us, as a people who preach a foundational belief in

peace, to fight not just against militarization and nuclear weapons, but against the systemic racism which inflicts violence on the poor and on people of color?

Our clerk affirmed that as a Yearly Meeting we have everything we need: we have healers, teachers, mystics, artists, philosophers, nurturers, and hard workers. Can we honor all our many gifts and give each other support? Cherice Bock, quoting Romans 12, shared that not all the members of the body have the same function “We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us”. Romans 12 also offers the concept “the body of Christ,” where each of us has a role, and none can exist without the other. We need activists, and we need ministers, but we need people to support the ministry, we need elders to ground all that we do, and we need pray-ers to pray for us all.

Words of encouragement completed the clerk’s remarks: “There is an essential pattern to our learning: Learn, DO, Reflect. Repeat. Let’s go home and start doing, but not at the expense of reflecting, and learning more. Let’s go home and spread the message: ‘the divine spirit is at work among us, and the world needs our attention.’ ”

7.6 Celebration of our Youth Programs

We enjoyed pictures of this week’s youth program in action, during which Kristina and Nahar Keefe-Perry (Fresh Pond) sang “Dear Friends” and Maggie Nelson (Portland) sang “My heart is ready and what am I gonna DO?”.

7.7 Sessions Coordinator

Rebecca Luechek, Sessions coordinator, expressed Friends' gratitude for all who have made this week possible. “I invite you to feel our interconnectedness and I ask, along the lines of how many are needed to screw in a lightbulb, how many Quakers does it take to crew our Sessions 2020 on its journey?”

Rebecca held up all the work of everyone on the way: the clerks’ table, our elders, epistle writers, home group planning team and facilitators, pastoral care team, noticing patterns group, Sessions Committee, Interpreters, youth program coordinators, members of various committees that brought us rich content for

discernment, the NEYM staff, and last, but not least, the Tech team. They build the boat.

She finished by reminding us that our voyage would not have been possible without everyone's presence, participation, love, and compassion. "We've all been rowing together this week. Gratitude and blessings for each one of you from all of us."

7.7 Epistles from the youth program

We received with joy an epistle from Junior Yearly Meeting read by Willard Peabody (Middlebury), a State of Society from Junior High Yearly Meeting read by Cora Redmond (Beacon Hill) and Conifer Gilbert (Cambridge), and an epistle from Young Friends read by Brennon Schifman (Providence), Olivia Mikkelsen (Worcester), and Emma Martin Mooney (New Haven).

7.8 Closing Worship

Friends closed in worship. Noah Merrill shared a message recalling Ursula LeGuin's Earthsea Trilogy. "They sing the eternal song that was in the beginning, that is written in our hearts, and in their singing their song comes more fully into the world. When the time to gather is done, they part with grief and gratitude and joy, returning in their smaller vessels. They depart knowing that the gathering is powerful and precious but their vessels were not made for the harbor they offer each other, they were made for the voyage. And whenever they feel alone or afraid they can turn to the song and find guidance and power in that moment. May it be so for us, Friends. May the dance and the story bless you and keep you until we meet again."

Rebecca Leuchek and Bill Monroe led us in a rendition of our theme song, "Row On," and our presiding clerk Bruce Neumann offered a closing prayer. We purpose and pray to meet again at Castleton University in Vermont, Aug 7-12, 2021.

Report to Permanent Board from the Presiding Clerk

September 19, 2020

Sessions: We did it! We pivoted to an on-line Annual Sessions and, with a relatively short timeline were able to set the table for a Sessions which, with a few exceptions, worked remarkably well. While we were optimistic about having a good number people, we really didn't know whether we would have 50 or 500, or 1000. In the end we had relatively similar numbers to in-person sessions. Business agenda was shortened and focused and, overall, Friends seemed to appreciate the change, at least given the format. Many of us felt that there was much greater connection and continuity between the various pieces, including plenary, bible half-hours, business agenda, and home groups. I appreciated that in the second year of our practice of noticing patterns, many friends other than those specifically appointed to the work, were noticing and naming patterns.

In a few areas we fell down a bit – options for Sunday worship were limited and communication was confusing; in our planning meetings we had touched on Friends' desire to gather informally, but had not made space for this. We also heard that there were a few micro-aggressions during home groups, not all of which were handled well.

While it is much too soon to name how, I believe many aspects of our experience in planning these virtual sessions will inform planning for next year when we will, God willing, be able to gather in-person. Framing and setting the agenda, and training small-group facilitators being two examples.

Post-Sessions work: Since Sessions approved forwarding two documents to Monthly Meetings for their consideration and discernment, I am shepherding this process. A letter will go out soon, which contains both the documents and an overview of how the work will be supported. As allowed by Sessions, I have met with interested and knowledgeable parties to edit the recommendations which will accompany the Letter of Apology to Native Americans. I am expecting that Leslie will report at this same PB Meeting about some suggested changes to the Reparations working group, which will both assemble written and video resources for the work, and will themselves act as resources to MM's.

Similarly, the Earthcare Ministries and Racial, Social, and Economic Justice committees will be assembling resources for work related to their "Call to Urgent Loving Action", and will act as resources on call for Monthly Meetings.

In both cases, I have arranged meetings with interested parties and staff, to ensure alignment between goals and intentions, and what staff support is needed.

Coordinating and Advisory: C&A held its annual end-of-summer retreat. Of course this had to be by Zoom. Since we have two new members- Scot Drysdale is now clerk of Finance, and Jeremiah Dickinson is Interim clerk of Ministry and Counsel- it is important to take some time to welcome them and begin to build some sense of community.

We did some visioning, and naming of priorities. Since our shepherding of the Purpose and Procedure process was interrupted by the pandemic, this is one piece of work we will be tending to in the coming year.

On-going: And finally I will add that our relationship with Friends United Meeting remains very much on my mind. I continue to reflect on how best to encourage a re-framing of the concerns, and how to prepare for expected discernment at next year's sessions. I am open to Friends reflections on this subject.

Areas of Focus

Noah Merrill, NEYM Secretary
October 2020-September 2021

Foundation in support of service:

Prayer practice, exercise, and recreation. Seek to work 5 days/week. Monday Sabbath, flexible additional day. Schedule multi-day retreat times. Continue preparation for sabbatical, to be scheduled as conditions allow. Nurture relationships. Celebrate progress. Cultivate courage, resilience, faith, and trust. Encourage experimentation and discovery. Engage accountability partners. Look for opportunities to be proactive.

Work with Staff and Coordinating & Advisory (C&A) teams, and with Permanent Board to:

1. facilitate a more shared vision of our work, and Friends' condition in our region;
2. strengthen collaboration, integration, and coordination;
3. invite us to be clear in our intentions as we make decisions;
4. lift up trade-offs, and provide context to inform present actions;
5. increase space for vision, innovation, risk-taking, reflection, and growth.

In partnership with staff, C&A, and Permanent Board, and with their support, focus my attention on contributing to our shared work in the ways below.

1. Encourage and Liberate Ministry

- a. Set a table for, consult with, and encourage those who serve their meetings
 - i. including biweekly local meeting leadership calls
- b. Set a table for, consult with, and encourage Friends active in public ministry, for vocational reflection and mutual encouragement in the service
- c. Ensure mentoring and accompaniment for those with emerging gifts
- d. Help local meetings connect with Friends active in public ministry
- e. Complete and present the recommendations of the Ministry & Spiritual Life working group, and support next steps the Yearly Meeting may be led to undertake in growth and discovery in support of ministry and spiritual life
- f. Create space to write and speak for a wider audience

2. Nurture Servant Leadership

- a. Prioritize opportunities to support those who serve their local meetings
 - i. including biweekly local meeting leadership calls
- b. Promote inclusion and remove barriers to participation, starting with barriers relating to age/life stage/family responsibilities, economic status, race
- c. Nurture capacity to connect Friends with relevant opportunities for mentoring, leadership development, and training
- d. Focus on aligning organizational structure and roles to facilitate effectiveness, integration, and a culture of collaboration

In all my work, ask:

Does this decision or action support the thriving of local meetings? How?

What context would be helpful for us in this moment?

What culture is fostered by this decision or action?

Are we engaging with the roots of this challenge—rather than merely addressing symptoms?

What is the Spirit's invitation for how we can live our faith in this context?

- e. Support integration and strengthening of capacity to name and nurture gifts, including in nominating for formal service
- f. Increase transparency of, access to, and awareness about Yearly Meeting policies, procedures, practices, and available resources

3. Foster Religious Education

- a. With a priority on serving those who serve in local meetings, ensure consistent availability of meaningful opportunities for spiritual formation, leadership development, and training in Quaker practice, supported by ongoing listening, evaluation, and reflection
- b. Support exploration and development of a next offering of the *Nurturing Faithfulness* spiritual formation program
- c. Identify and carry forward next steps in related crucial areas for growth, including lifelong spiritual formation, outreach & welcoming, and caring for the whole lifecycle of meetings (including accompanying Friends birthing new meetings and Friends offering “hospice” as meetings are laid down)

4. Lead Development Program

- a. Convene Friends to explore and develop an approach to endowments as a “carrier for vision” for the present and future of Friends ministry
- b. Develop and implement new practices to engage Friends serving as volunteers in our development ministry, in more meaningful and integrated ways
- c. Ensure programming and resources to cultivate a stewardship worldview among New England Friends
- d. Plan, manage, and integrate annual fundraising efforts for FY2021
- e. Interpret the ministries of New England Quakers, listen to Friends’ hopes and concerns, report on the progress Friends’ gifts—of all kinds—have made possible, invite increased engagement and support

5. Focus and Integrate Communications

- a. Plan and feature diverse and dynamic voices and stories of Friends through monthly email newsletter and other channels
- b. Further strengthen NEYM’s ability to respond swiftly and sensitively to emerging events, including the possibilities of political violence and civil disorder
- c. Continue development and management of communications calendar, strategy, and team for NEYM
- d. Develop capacity for integrated planning for strategic communications
- e. Ensure creation, and promote consistent use of, style guides, policy, and training to support effective, aligned communications, cultivating a more consistent and compelling *voice* for NEYM
- f. Improve data gathering and focused use of data to support engagement and publicity for events and training opportunities, and to help align gifts and experience with opportunities for service

2

In all my work, ask:

Does this decision or action support the thriving of local meetings? How?

What context would be helpful for us in this moment?

What culture is fostered by this decision or action?

Are we engaging with the roots of this challenge—rather than merely addressing symptoms?

What is the Spirit’s invitation for how we can live our faith in this context?

In the context of these areas of focus, I anticipate investing significant energy in several major projects, including:

1. Continuing accompaniment, support, and responsiveness to the needs of local meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic, including
 - a. Partnering with the Youth Ministries staff and Youth Ministries Committee to support flexible, relevant responses to the needs of families and meetings for youth ministry
 - b. Engaging in ongoing partnership and consultation with Friends serving in leadership roles in local meetings
 - c. Curating and creating resources relevant to emerging needs, and sharing meetings' responses and learning
 - d. Ongoing ecumenical partnership supporting community needs
2. Ensuring partnership from the wider YM in supporting the particular needs of Friends Camp, in this especially challenging context
3. Supporting continuing integration, support, and coherence among the various ways the Yearly Meeting and Friends in our region are working for justice and equity, seeking to act in ways—and promote policies and practices—that are antiracist, seeking wholeness and right relationship;
4. Supporting Friends living into the recommendations of the Ministry & Spiritual Life working group as an ongoing process of discovery;
5. Partnering with the Finance Committee, Treasurer, and Accounts Manager to forecast financial needs and impacts, and to develop contingency plans and propose adjustments to spending and income goals as needed;
6. Exercising overall responsibility and care for the planning process for Sessions 2021, including supporting the Yearly Meeting's assessment, discernment, and decision-making about options for in-person, hybrid, and virtual components of Sessions, and ensuring integration and coherence in planning and implementation;
7. Supporting the Presiding Clerk, FUM representatives, and local and quarterly meeting leadership in shepherding discernment regarding the NEYM policy on withholding from Friends United Meeting, and NEYM's advocacy to change the FUM personnel policy;
8. In partnership with Coordinating & Advisory Committee and Permanent Board, completing a review of Purposes, Procedures, and Composition, including discernment and implementation of recommendations.

3

In all my work, ask:

Does this decision or action support the thriving of local meetings? How?

What context would be helpful for us in this moment?

What culture is fostered by this decision or action?

Are we engaging with the roots of this challenge—rather than merely addressing symptoms?

What is the Spirit's invitation for how we can live our faith in this context?

**Report to Permanent Board
From the Finance Committee
September 19, 2020**

Budget Commentary: FY21 Draft Budget

The draft budget being presented to Permanent Board in September 2020 was approved by the Finance Committee in April 2020 during the period when the COVID-19 pandemic was just beginning to take hold. The budget was presented to Permanent Board for comment in early July, and reviewed again by the Finance Committee in late August following an open Budget Listening Session earlier that day.

As we are still in a period where even short-term projections are uncertain, Friends should consider this budget as a “spending plan” that will likely need adjustment as we get into the fiscal year and the Yearly Meeting makes decisions on how its work will unfold.

The Finance Committee will be especially interested in hearing any further guidance on how the budget can reallocate funds to remove barriers to participation in the activities of the Yearly Meeting.

This draft FY2021 budget includes some modest increases from last year’s budget to respond to the funding priorities Permanent Board approved in November 2019.

Specifically:

1. For the priority of supporting inclusive leadership, we have added \$1000 to line 6167 Religious Education and Outreach.
2. For the priority of supporting peer support and consultation we have added \$1000 to line 6105 Honoraria to allow more honoraria to be used for 2021 Sessions.
3. For the priority of supporting spiritual formation we have added \$1000 to line 6167 Religious Education and Outreach.
4. For the priority of supporting global relationships, we have set aside \$1700 (~\$5000/3) for FWCC travel, to be transferred to the 3630 World Conference Travel Board Designated Fund for use in a future year.

In addition:

- The proposed budget supports ongoing efforts to see that NEYM provides equitable salary levels and benefits for our employees.
- The amount designated for staff travel was reduced from the FY20 budget to bring it into line with actual expenses in prior years.
- The amount in the Accounting Services and Legal Services lines has decreased because the funds set aside for these purposes have reached an adequate level.
- We realize that the level of Monthly Meeting Contributions may be a challenge for some meetings. We are hoping that other meetings will consider raising their contribution to help the Yearly Meeting fulfill its purpose during this difficult period.

Revised September 13, 2020

- An increased number of online meetings may require greater use of the Childcare and Software line items. We can shift budget lines to accommodate this, as needed.

Signature: Robert Murray, NEYM Treasurer; former clerk, Finance Committee

NOTE: The budget will be presented to Permanent Board for approval; it is presented here solely for information.

Treasurer's Report

In 2015, as clerk of the Finance Committee, I began their report, "We need a Treasurer!" (emphasis in the original.) Little did I realize as I wrote that what lay in store for me at the end of those Sessions. I have been led to believe a repeat of that plea at last year's Sessions has been answered, for which I am grateful. So the following is a brief review of the past 5 years.

The second paragraph of that report began, "The Finance Committee understands that the Yearly Meeting is in a transitional period in the way it develops budgets." Previously, budgets had been developed using a scarcity model, reinforced by 2008 recession, in which expenses were limited by income estimates, based on what had been previously received. Beginning with FY2014, budgets were based on what was needed to support the programs of the Yearly Meeting and the income expectations raised to meet the need. This intentionally led to a series of deficit budgets as we, as a Yearly Meeting, increased our giving to meet that need. Last year (FY2019) the first major milestone was reached when we achieved the first Operating Budget surplus since 2009. While we accomplished that without dipping into our reserves as much as feared, we still have before us the second part of that effort which is to rebuild our reserves.

In conjunction with deficit budgets, we began a process of re-visioning the future of the Yearly Meeting and its purposes and functions. As the final piece of that effort, last year the Yearly Meeting adopted a new priorities budgeting process which encourages Friends to look into the future and consider the Yearly Meeting's evolving needs and programs. NEYM is rededicating itself to the challenges of how we should respond to a number of separate but related issues: the Doctrine of Discovery, the challenge of dismantling white supremacy, re-visioning how our governments provide services to the residents, supporting Black Lives Matter, enabling a more inclusive and supported path to leadership within our meetings, etc. None of these can be addressed and resolved in a few years. The proposed budget for next year includes a few items to address some the initial steps as we continue our struggle to adequately understand and address those issues.

And that brings me to the main big question for this, and increasingly likely, next year—which is how the global response to the pandemic is affecting our financial circumstances. I do not know the answer! This year the change of Sessions to an online series of events means extra uncertainty in our ability to cover our costs, as there is no historical basis to guide us in setting the fees or anticipate attendance. The Pay-as-Led registration fees depend on those of us who are able to provide support for those who cannot afford the full registrations fees. And as of June 1st, our operating deficit was \$23,000 over what it was at the same point last year. While I do believe our reserves are sufficient to see us through this period of uncertainty, our intention was to begin rebuilding the reserves. The continued long-term viability of the Yearly Meeting depends on Friends' continued generosity.

Thank you for your support,

—SHEARMAN TABER

FY20/21 Budget Commentary

Planning is difficult in the midst of a major national or international disaster, such as the one we face now with the COVID-19 pandemic. This budget was developed as the pandemic was just beginning to take hold and efforts to reduce its spread were starting to be implemented. The Finance Committee could see that our plans for the coming year might need to be significantly altered, but knew we could not anticipate what those changes would be and thus did not adjust for those eventualities. To that end, the Committee realizes that it may need to request revisions to the approved budget prior to or during fiscal year 2021, if and when they are presented with a revised set of guidelines for the activities of the Yearly Meeting in FY21.

With that cautious introduction, the Finance Committee presents a draft FY2021 budget for your consideration. We did include in the budget some modest increases from last year's budget to align the budget with the funding priorities Permanent Board approved in November 2019 and forwarded to the Finance Committee.

Specifically:

1. For the priority of supporting inclusive leadership, we have added \$1000 to line 6167 Religious Education and Outreach.
2. For the priority of supporting peer support and consultation we have added \$1000 to line 6105 Honoraria to allow more honoraria to be used for 2021 Sessions.
3. For the priority of supporting spiritual formation we have added \$1000 to line 6167 Religious Education and Outreach.
4. For the priority of supporting global relationships, we have set aside \$1700 (~\$5000/3) for FWCC travel, to be transferred to the 3630 World Conference Travel Board Designated Fund for use in a future year.

In addition:

- The proposed budget supports ongoing efforts to see that NEYM provides equitable salary levels and benefits for our employees.
- The amount designated for staff travel was reduced from the FY20 budget to bring it into line with actual expenses in prior years.
- The amount in the Accounting Services and Legal Services lines has decreased because the funds set aside for these purposes have reached an adequate level.

—BOB MURRAY, CLERK OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

[The budget appears on the following pages.]

New England Yearly Meeting FY 2021 Operating (Non-Camp) Budget Proposal

version 4-3-2020b approved Finance Committee 4-11-2020

Category	FY2019		FY2020 Budget	△ FY20 to FY21	FY2021 Draft Budget	Note
	Actuals	Budget				
Income						
4010 Individual Contributions	210,194	212,000	215,500	14,725	230,225	
4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions				0		
General Fund Contributions	317,286	350,000	350,000	0	350,000	
Equalization Contributions	15,971	23,000	27,000	-4,000	23,000	
Total 4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions	333,257	373,000	377,000	-4,000	373,000	¹
4030 Organizations Contributions	1	0	0	0	0	
4050 Interest and Dividend Income	9,303	4,000	9,000	0	9,000	
4070 Books and other Items	20,077	16,000	17,000	0	17,000	
4080 Retreat Program Fees	44,618	50,000	50,000	-3,000	47,000	
4085 Sessions Program Fees	202,936	185,000	201,000	10,050	211,050	²
4090 Change in Fair Market Value	960	0	0	0	0	
4099 Net Assets Released To/From	660	8,500	0	0	0	
Total Income	822,005	848,500	869,500	17,775	887,275	
Expenses						
5000 Staff						
5010 Salaries & Wages	284,515	267,426	305,920	22,276	328,196	
5020 Payroll Taxes	21,100	20,511	23,403	1,704	25,107	
5030 Benefits	73,584	75,978	76,908	1,308	78,216	
Total 5000 Staff	379,198	363,915	406,231	25,288	431,519	³
5100 General & Administration						
5110 Administration						
5120 Bank Expense	7,280	6,000	6,000	1,000	7,000	
5130 Contracted Services	18,702	60,396	31,896	-996	30,900	
5135 Accounting Services	4,000	4,000	4,000	-2,500	1,500	⁴
5140 Legal Services	7,771	7,750	5,250	-3,750	1,500	⁴
(TBD) Infrastructure				1,000	1,000	⁵
5150 Liability Insurance	4,071	4,000	4,000	1,100	5,100	⁶
5160 Payroll Service	5,229	4,500	4,500	700	5,200	
5170 Recruiting Expense		500	0	0	0	
5180 Rent	9,350	9,350	9,350	0	9,350	
5190 Misc. Expense	488	0	0	0	0	
Total 5110 Administration	56,890	96,496	64,996	2,554	67,550	
5200 Office Expenses	32,252	37,015	36,515	500	37,015	
Total 5100 General & Administration	89,142	133,511	101,511	3,054	104,565	
5300 Travel & Conferences						
5310 Travel - Committee	7,217	3,000	2,500	500	3,000	
5320 Travel - Clerk	3,552	5,000	4,000	500	4,500	
5330 Travel - Programs	1,460	4,600	4,600	-900	3,700	
5335 Travel - Rep. Travel	4,746	5,000	10,000	-3,300	6,700	⁷
5350 Travel - Staff	15,032	18,000	17,500	-500	17,000	⁸
5360 Travel - Ministries		400	400	0	400	
Total 5300 Travel & Conferences	32,007	36,000	39,000	-3,700	35,300	

Category	FY2019		FY2020 Budget	△ FY20 to FY21	FY2021 Draft Budget	Note
	Actuals	Budget				
6000 Programs				0		
6110 Sessions Room & Board	173,649	170,000	175,950	5,190	181,140	
6112 Room & Board	32,754	38,000	38,000	0	38,000	
6125 Program Expenses	27,710	32,800	35,800	2,500	38,300	
6130 Committee Expenses	6,626	14,200	14,450	-6,100	8,350	
6160 Program Support	2,609	4,020	2,220	2,000	4,220	
Total 6000 Programs	243,348	259,020	266,420	3,590	270,010	
6140 Books and Other	17,447	14,500	15,000	-500	14,500	
6200 Support of Other Orgs				0		
6310 FGC	13,075	13,075	13,075	0	13,075	
6320 FUM	11,357	13,075	13,075	0	13,075	
6325 FWCC	13,075	13,075	13,075	0	13,075	
6310-6325 FGC, FUM & FWCC	37,507	39,225	39,225	0	39,225	
Other Friends Organizations						
6328 Ramallah Friends School	100	100	100	0	100	
6335 AFSC	300	300	300	0	300	
6340 FCNL	750	750	750	0	750	
6345 QEW	300	300	300	0	300	
6350 Friends Peace Teams	100	100	100	0	100	
6355 FWCC 3rd World Travel	500	500	500	0	500	
6360 QUNO	200	200	200	0	200	
6362 Quaker Voluntary Service	100	100	100	0	100	
6328-6362 Other Friends' Organizations	2,350	2,350	2,350	0	2,350	
6590 Ecumenical Organizations	3,614	4,400	4,400	0	4,400	
Total 6200-6500 Support of Other Orgs.	43,471	45,975	45,975	0	45,975	
6600 Publications				0		
+ Directory)		1,000	1,000	-1,000	0	
6620 New England Friend (Sessions Issue)	3,522	3,000	3,000	1,000	4,000	
Total 6600 Publications	3,522.15	4,000	4,000	0	4,000	
Total Expenses	808,136.85	856,921	878,137	27,732	905,869	
Net Operating Income	13,868.24	-8,421	-8,637	-9,957	-18,594	
Other Income & Other Expense						
9940 Other Income—transfers other funds	32,072.22					
Total Other Income	32,072.22					
Net Other Income	32,072.22					
Net Income	45,940.46	(8,421.09)	(8,637.00)	(9,956.76)	(18,593.76)	

Notes:

1. To be conservative, monthly meeting contributions were kept at the 2019 level.
2. Assumes a room and board fee increase by Castleton Univ in summer 2021.
3. Increases in salaries are due to a COLA increase, merit raises and raises to keep staff in equitable pay ranges.
4. The amount of the Accounting Services and Legal Services lines has decreased due to adequate amounts already in the funds set aside for those purposes.
5. The final account number for the "Infrastructure" item has not been determined yet. This item was approved by Permanent Board in February 2020.
6. Includes new "cyber liability" protection.
7. The budget sets aside \$1700 (~\$5000/3) for FWCC travel, to be transferred to the 3630 World Conference Travel Board Designated Fund.
8. This reduced amount is consistent with actual Staff Travel in prior years.

FY2021 Proposed Committee Budgets

Committee	FY20 Budget	FY21 Proposed
Archives	-	
Coordinating & Advisory	500	500
Development	1,000	-
Earthcare Ministries	350	100
Faith and Practice	1,050	1,050
FGC	100	100
Finance	100	100
Friends Camp	-	-
FUM	350	100
FWCC	750	100
Ministry and Counsel	1,650	100
Nominating	1,650	500
Personnel	-	-
Permanent Board	250	100
Challenging White Supremacy WG	600	100
Puente de Amigos	1,500	1,500
Racial Social Econ Justice	1,500	1,500
Youth Ministries	600	500
Total	11,950	6,350

NOTE: The Bank Resolutions were approved by the Permanent Board on July 11, 2020; they are presented here for information only.

Bank Resolutions Minute

The following resolutions are brought by the Finance Committee:

1. That Robert Murray be appointed New England Yearly Meeting treasurer for the ensuing year or until a successor is appointed and qualified.
2. That Robert M. Spivey be appointed Friends Camp treasurer for the ensuing year or until a successor is appointed and qualified.
3. That Robert Murray, Yearly Meeting treasurer; and Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting secretary; be individually authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of New England Yearly Meeting as needed.
4. That Robert M. Spivey, Friends Camp treasurer; and Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp director, be individually authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of Friends Camp as needed.
5. That Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting secretary; Robert Murray, New England Yearly Meeting treasurer; and Bruce Neumann, presiding clerk, be designated as alternate signers, individually, of all bank accounts of

New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, except those checks for greater than \$10,000, which shall require the signatures of two signers from the list above.

6. That Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp director; Robert M. Spivey, Friends Camp treasurer; and John Reuthe, Friends Camp Committee clerk, be authorized, individually, as signers of the Friends Camp bank accounts, except those checks for greater than \$10,000, which shall require the signatures of two signers from the list above.

Report to Permanent Board From the *Ad-hoc* Workgroup on Challenging White Supremacy

September 19, 2020 Permanent Board Meeting

Purpose, Background and Policy:

The Permanent Board *ad-hoc* workgroup on Challenging White Supremacy (CWS) was convened in 2017 with the charge of responding to the query from the Clerk of New England Yearly Meeting with regard to the 2016 NEYM Minute on White Supremacy: *“How will this faithful engagement with the work of interrupting white supremacy among the people called Quakers in NE continue?”* (Fritz Weiss, NEYM Clerk).

Review of workgroup activities: The focus of this workgroup from the outset has been to support, motivate and encourage New England Friends who identify as white, and their monthly meetings, to energetically progress on the road to becoming a caring, just and anti-racist society. CWS has offered workshops from 2 to 6 hours in length, for meetings, Quarters and NEYM, on racial identity, implicit bias, how to see the signs and evidence of white supremacy-tainted thinking and behaviors, and how to transform these behaviors when we recognize them in ourselves.

We, as a PB workgroup, dedicated to “challenging white supremacy” wish to attest to, and celebrate the widespread evidence of a shift in readiness and commitment to the work of anti-racism around the Yearly Meeting due to committed and faithful outreach to encourage racial healing by many Friends, and due to the inspired and compelling ministry we have received, to awaken hearts to the imperative of this work.

Going Forward:

With all the evidence that priorities and needs are evolving, CWS wants to maintain an agnostic attitude about the future of the workgroup. All members of CWS have demonstrated a personal commitment and priority to continue the work of racial healing. In fact several of our members have accepted responsibilities for racial justice-related work that will limit their time and availability for service on CWS. Some on the workgroup have expressed a leading to move beyond the initial stages of teaching racism awareness as a cultural phenomenon, and to rather engage with Friends in the deeper spiritual imperative to root out the foundations of “othering” and domination culture within our hearts—work for which white people have a particular responsibility. CWS is clear that we, as an *ad hoc* work group, are in a place of transition in our understanding of our mission. Our priority is to support and advance the blossoming sense of collaboration and intersectionality that is in evidence among the various racial justice committees and work groups (RSEJ, Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness, Reparations (now laid down), and Earthcare Ministries). We also appreciate and support the effort and commitment that was devoted to the “Calls” for healing and justice that were brought to Sessions 2020, and the *ad hoc* activities of individuals who are working diligently to interrupt racist behaviors and foster racial healing.

The landscape of the work of racial justice and racial healing is evolving within the Yearly Meeting and CWS does not yet know how we as individuals, or as a work group, can best support that evolution. We have welcomed the news that RSEJ/Earthcare Witness wish to reconvene a meeting of representatives

from the various racial justice committees this fall and we trust that way will open as we listen and strive to be faithful to the work together.

Submitted by Susan Davies,

Clerk of *ad hoc* Challenging White Supremacy workgroup

Right Relationship? A Proposal for a New Resource Group

The Reparations (for Native Americans) Working Group has asked to be laid down, as their work is completed. There remains a need to support Meetings and Quarters who wish to engage with the Apology approved by Sessions to be distributed in the coming year.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the Presiding Clerk and the Clerk of the Permanent Board to form a short-term Resource Group to develop resources and work with staff to make these available through the robust communications network of the Yearly Meeting as well as to support discernment and engagement with monthly meetings and worship groups on Right Relationship with Indigenous People until Sessions 2021.

Members of the Resource Group include Suzanna Schell of the Reparations Working Group and former co-clerk of the Legacy Gift Committee, Andy Grant and Don Campbell of Mt. Toby Monthly Meeting and others to be appointed by the clerk of the board, in consultation with the Presiding Clerk.

We respectfully request that these two items be approved,

That the Reparations Working Group be laid down; and

That the Right Relationship Resource Group be approved to report back to Permanent Board at least once before Sessions. 2021.

Thank you for your consideration.

Leslie Manning
Clerk and Convenor of the Reparations WG
Clerk of the Permanent Board

Ministry and Spiritual Life Working Group
Report for Permanent Board
19 September 2020

Since Sessions 2020 the Ministry and Spiritual Life Working Group has hosted 12 hours of Zoom-based listening over eight calls, including 27 ministers and elders, and attended by Jeremiah Dickinson, the Interim Clerk of Ministry and Counsel, and Leslie Manning, the clerk of Permanent Board.

During these calls we sought to hear the experiences of ministers and elders, both when they felt support rising from their local meetings (and beyond), and when that support was lacking. We also invited specific feedback on our draft working paper, to hear where recommendations resonated, or did not, with their lived experience and their hopes for better practices.

The list of practitioners invited to these discernment calls was not exhaustive, but we hope that it was widely representative. Among those included were past and present members of M&C, past clerks of M&C, past and current clerks of monthly meeting M&Cs, those who carry travel minutes, those who are paid pastors, recorded ministers, seminarians, those who see themselves primarily as elders, employees of Quaker organizations, published writers, those with powerful vocal ministry, and those whose ministry bears fruit in active witness.

We took a lot of notes! Friends were also invited to send in additional, written comment to be included in our continuing discernment. There is a great deal for us to consider in prayer as we find our way forward, re-writing our draft document before it is presented to M&C and then, to Permanent Board, God willing, at your gathering on 31 October.

We welcome your thoughts and questions at any time.

For the Ministry and Spiritual Life Working Group,

Sarah Gant, Clerk (Beacon Hill)
sarah.gant@post.harvard.edu

Hugh MacArthur (Hanover)
Noah Merrill (Putney)
Nancy Middleton (Putney)
Nia Thomas (Northampton)

11 September 2020

Background on the Personnel Resource Group Proposal

In the spring of 2019, a small group volunteered to update the Personnel Policy Manual for the Personnel Committee. The group consisted of the Clerk of the Personnel Committee, Yearly Meeting Secretary, the Yearly Meeting Secretary's supervisor (all current members of Personnel), and the former clerk of the Personnel Committee (who had brought the current Personnel Policy Manual to Permanent Board for approval in 2016).

It quickly became clear to this group that the Personnel Policy Manual needed to be fully rewritten, not just updated. Much of the language in the 2016 version came from the time when the Personnel Committee had more of an approval function than it does now. In the past six years, the Yearly Meeting Secretary has been asked to assume many of the duties once done by the Personnel Committee.

On Feb 15, 2020, Robert Murray brought a recommendation from C&A to Permanent Board to form an ad hoc committee to determine:

- What form of support and oversight the Permanent Board needs to be assured that NEYM is treating our employees with the respect and fairness that they deserve?
- How the Yearly Meeting Secretary can best get knowledgeable support for complex personnel issues? and
- What mechanism should the Yearly Meeting use to reach and maintain an appropriate compensation level for the Yearly Meeting Secretary?

The Clerk of the Personnel Committee (Dulany Bennet), Yearly Meeting Secretary (Noah Merrill), the Yearly Meeting Secretary's supervisor (Elizabeth Reuthe), the former clerk of the Personnel Committee (Robert Murray), the Director of Friends Camp (Anna Hopkins) and Phil Stone - a member of Permanent Board from the Worcester Meeting were named to this committee to make recommendations to Permanent Board. Elizabeth Reuthe was asked to convene the group.

The group met several times and developed a Purposes, Procedures, and Composition document which was shared with the Personnel Committee on May 15, 2020. The Personnel Committee reviewed the work, and with a few helpful changes supported the document (as amended by the committee).

Finally, the Ad Hoc Committee met May 29, approving the final changes. The results of this work is the Purposes, Procedures, and Composition document attached.

Present via Zoom videoconferencing: Dulany Bennett (clerk), Elizabeth Szatkowski, Chris Gant, Nat Shed, Sarah Gant, Eleta Jones and Maureen Lopes (recording)

Ex Offio: Noah Merrill (Yearly Meeting Secretary), Leslie Manning (Permanent Board Clerk), and Elizabeth Reuthe (Yearly Meeting Secretary's supervisor)

The meeting opened with a period of waiting worship.

Attendees introduced themselves, their meeting and their role on the Personnel Committee. Nat Shed and Eleta Jones were welcomed as new members.

Consideration: "Proposal to Permanent Board from the Coordinating and Advisory Committee (C&A), February 15, 2020)" attached.

The Background section provided an update on what has been happening since the Personnel Committee (PC) last met in the spring of 2019. A small ad hoc group found that the Personnel Policy Manual needed to be fully rewritten, not just updated. Major changes have occurred as NEYM moved from a 'field secretary' position, without personnel responsibilities, to the 'yearly meeting secretary' role.

The ad hoc group took to C&A a recommendation to create a new ad hoc committee to thoroughly determine the best structure for personnel. These individuals have offered to serve: Dulany Bennet, Clerk of the current Personnel Committee, Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary, Elizabeth Reuthe, the Yearly Meeting Secretary's supervisor, Robert Murray, former clerk of the Personnel Committee, Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp Director and Bill Stone from Worcester Meeting who is an attorney with a working knowledge of personnel law.

Minute: Personnel Committee is in unity with the proposal to Permanent Board to lay down the PC as currently constituted and to create a new personnel group to support the YM Secretary and "ensure that NEYM is a good employer, acting in ways that are consistent with our Quaker values and following best practices".

Consideration: "Purposes and Procedures of Personnel Resource Group". Elizabeth Reuthe shared the second document to be forwarded to Permanent Board (attached). She will make recommended edits.

Permanent Board will meet on June 6 and decide whether to forward the recommendations to Session for affirmation. Internal Nominating will be responsible for identifying 2-4 individuals to fill the non-ex officio positions. Sarah Gant was given guidance by Leslie Manning that Internal Nominating could begin this work as early as their meeting on Monday, May 18.

Dulany Bennett held up the “layers of work that had gone into these changes and the spirit in which the fruits of the work have been received”. She also thanked Nat and Eleta for volunteering for PC. All current members and recent former members will receive these minutes and documents to help ‘close the circle’.

Purposes, Procedures, and Composition of Personnel Resource Group¹

Purpose

The role of the Personnel Resource Group (PRG)¹ is to ensure that New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) is a good employer, acting in ways that are consistent with our Quaker values and following best practices. The PRG reports to the Permanent Board. The PRG members advise the Yearly Meeting (YM) Secretary on complex personnel matters, upon request.

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Procedures

The Personnel Resource Group will:

- Conduct its work confidentially to protect employee confidentiality
- Convene at the request of the NEYM Secretary, the Group's clerk, the Permanent Board clerk, or Coordinating and Advisory Committee (C&A)
- Annually review NEYM personnel policies and procedures to ensure compliance with those policies and/or provide comments and suggestions concerning Personnel Policy changes with an eye to incorporating best practices including staff compensation and benefits practices and staff annual evaluation processes and status.
- Advise the Permanent Board concerning the results of its annual policy and procedure review and make recommendations concerning any Personnel Policy changes that might be required in the light of standard best practices.
- Review the Yearly Meeting (YM) Secretary's annual feedback (which is completed by the Supervisor).
- Provide requested input to the Friends Camp Personnel Committee on personnel issues.²
- During the annual budgeting process, review with the YM Secretary the recommended compensation and benefits for staff members (clerk of the PRG only).
- Perform special projects as requested by the YM Secretary, Permanent Board, or C&A

Composition

Ex officio members of the PRG are the YM Secretary, the Supervisor of the YM Secretary and the Clerk of Permanent Board (all members of C&A).

Two to four other members will be nominated by Permanent Board Internal Nominating Committee (in consultation with YM Secretary and the Clerk of Permanent Board) and appointed by the Permanent Board. The essential role of these named members is bringing knowledge of best personnel practices to NEYM. The term would be three staggered years.

The named members should bring relevant expertise in one or more of the following personnel areas: leadership, management, cultural change, performance evaluation, compensation and benefits (including salary surveys), recruitment and hiring practices that support diversity and inclusion, employee development, employee relations, and organizational structure. Group members need not be members of Permanent Board.

¹ Personnel Resource Group is a temporary name that Permanent Board may change

²The New England Yearly Meeting personnel policy applies to the Friends Camp Director, while separate policies govern the Friends Camp part-time and seasonal staff. The Friends Camp personnel policies are in accordance with Maine State youth camp licensing requirements and the American Camp Association requirements.

Purposes, Procedures, and Composition of Personnel Resource Group¹

Additional people may be asked to work on a specific special project. For example, when the Personnel Policy is updated, the PRG might ask a member of the staff and/or a member of the Friends Camp Personnel Committee to participate.

The PRG clerk will be nominated by Permanent Board Internal Nominating Committee following consultation with the Clerk of Permanent Board and YM Secretary and approved by Permanent Board. The clerk will be one of the named members of the PRG and will report to Permanent Board about the work of the PRG as needed.

Why the Pivot to the Personnel Resource Group From the Personnel Committee?

A Summary

What is the value of the change?

- The Size of the Committee and lack depth in employee relations expertise allowed breaches of confidentiality
- The Personnel Resource Group is smaller and nimbler.
- This group of experts is more likely able to organize complex personnel tasks such as compensation surveys, creating new policies that reflect the current reality, anticipating legal requirements (such as family leave) and specific sensitive personnel issues
- The new group can help us recruit, hire, and train with diversity in mind

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Who would appoint it?

- 3 ex-officio, 2-4 people with expertise in Personnel Best Practices. All non-ex-officio members are:
 - Nominated by Internal Nominating in consultation with the Secretary and clerk of permanent board.
 - Approved by the Board
- Clerk is a nominated member (not a serving ex-officio member of PB)
 - Appointed by Internal Nominating in consultation with the Secretary and Clerk of permanent board.

For more detailed comparison, please see the table attached.

Why the Pivot to the Personnel Resource Group From the Personnel Committee?

	Previously	Proposed
Basic Role	Changes made or new actions to be taken, positions or job descriptions adjusted, performance evaluations finalized (the committee received and read performance appraisals for staff), etc. Personnel Committee saw these changes as required.	Responsible for providing support to the Secretary. Provide PB with assurance that NEYM policies are best practices with an annual review and if appropriate recommended policy changes.
Size of Group/ Ex-Officio Members/ Expertise	Personnel Committee was large and consisted up to 14 people including the Secretary, Supervisor, the Clerk of PB, the Treasurer (all ex officio) and 7-9 of other people, sometimes with limited expertise in Employee Relations and Massachusetts and Maine labor law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group size = 14 resulted in difficulty scheduling meetings 	The resource group includes the Secretary, Supervisor, Clerk of PB(all ex officio) and 2 – 4 appointed members who are well informed about best practices such as comp & benefits, new legal requirements that may be in the works (family leave act) and latest employee relations best practices of inclusivity and diversity in hiring and training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The size of the group (Max =7) allows it to be nimble
Confidentiality	Meeting Conversations were not always kept confidential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The size of the group & the diversity of employee relations expertise resulted in breaches of confidential information The entire group needed to be convened for the Secretary to bring sensitive issues to the group 	Charged with conducting its work confidentially <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The smaller group and the understanding of best practices will limit confidentiality breaches. It will be possible for the Secretary to consult with one on one with PRG members in the moment.
Meeting Schedule	Last year, convened to recommend laying itself down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required At least annually to review the policy manual and the Secretary's Review and C&A compensation request
Presence at PB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel reported decisions to PB including creating a policy manual. Clerk was an ex-officio member of PB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PRG will use their expertise to review the Policy Manual and once a year recommend any changes in policy to PB PB will approve Clerk is not a member of PB
Non Ex-Officio Nominating process	Internal Nominating Committee recommended members of personnel committee and PB approved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The non- ex-officio members are recommended by the PB clerk in consultation with the Secretary and the Internal Nominating Committee Approved by Permanent Board.

Why the Pivot to the Personnel Resource Group From the Personnel Committee?

<p>Applicable Expertise</p>	<p>Personnel Committee as a body did not have the expertise in many aspects of personnel management including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • researching and establishing salary ranges, • understanding trends that might impact NEYM, • providing best practices for hiring and training for inclusion, and • providing advice about sensitive employee issues. 	<p>PRG may take on other tasks at the request of the Secretary, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organizing salary and benefit research and recommending salary ranges for new or existing NEYM roles. • Investigating best practices for recruiting and training employees in support of diversity and inclusion • Specific issues that require sensitivity and confidentiality
<p>Work</p>	<p>Personnel Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed the C&A salary recommendation for the Secretary each year (The Secretary was never present for those conversations) • Made recommendations on salary ranges, benefits, benefits policy, and other compensation for all staff • After discussion and approval by the Committee, the YM Sec lumped the YM salary recommendation with those for other staff salaries and forwarded as a lump sum to the Finance Committee for the following year draft budget. • Reviewed on a regular basis personnel practices, policies, and staffing structure; develops personnel policies for approval by Permanent Board; and documents them and maintains them as a manual • Received and reviewed the job description for the YM Secretary, developed by C&A, and forwards to Permanent Board for approval • Reviewed and approved job descriptions for program and administrative Yearly Meeting staff • Reviewed, and forwarded to Permanent Board for approval, the job description for the Camp Director, developed by the Camp Committee 	<p>PRG will advise and consult on certain tasks including the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing research on the similar roles to the Secretary's and determining an appropriate salary range for C&A guidance. • The Secretary's annual feedback process • Hiring and training for diversity and inclusivity • The Personnel Resource Group may take on other tasks at the request of the PB Clerk or the Secretary • The Secretary will recuse themselves where appropriate

Why the Pivot to the Personnel Resource Group From the Personnel Committee?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acted to resolve differences, or facilitate the relationship between the YM Secretary, supervisors, and employees, either upon its own initiative or upon request• Received and reviewed reports on personnel matters from the YM Secretary, including performance appraisals and recommended changes in job descriptions• Ensured that an annual performance appraisal for all Regular staff took place• Annually received the performance appraisals from C&A for the YM Secretary and from the Camp Committee for the Camp Director.	
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**Approved as a Minute at Sandwich Monthly Meeting for Business on July 12,
2020 Approved at Sandwich Quarterly Meeting for Business on July 25, 2020**

AN OPEN-HEARTED PLEA CONCERNING NATIVE PEOPLES AND MASHPEE IN PARTICULAR

Sandwich Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, known as Quakers, does not, as an organization, weigh in on political sides. Friends vary in their political affiliations. However, Friends have always had a strong moral interest in the society at large. This sensitivity almost always has political consequences, that we have accepted without endorsing. This letter is a case in point.

Our plea is a moral one. The Federal government has removed its protection of lands in trust for the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe, in spite of their previous decisions given the tribe's recognition as a sovereign entity. In plain terms this is yet another case of the Federal government voiding a treaty obligation arbitrarily, deliberately, and destructively for its own political ends. The decision appears to us morally bankrupt and oppressive. Of course, this matter is presently before the courts. We are painfully aware of the often destructive history of the Federal government with regard to native peoples. Friends in general and individually encourage any action by the government that repairs historical injustice or enables native tribes to pursue their own destinies in a positive relationship with the Federal government. Therefore, it is doubly painful to see past evil revisited yet again upon human beings who have already had to contend with the various prejudices of being the first human occupants of the land.

Sandwich Monthly Meeting has a suggestion for individuals who own land, to orient their thinking and relationship to native peoples in a positive moral and reparative manner. To wit, when land is sold by someone, one percent of the profit can be designated by the seller to go to a local tribe. This kind of relationship honors the present sense of law and ownership, while acknowledging the moral debt landowners have by virtue of an often bad history not of their own making. We are particularly interested in the concept of a relationship with the land itself, and native peoples, that is morally positive and aids in repairing past action. We are particularly interested in a relationship that is contemporary, healing, and not based upon returning to some ideal past. We are particularly interested in the Federal government being a moral and healing partner with native peoples rather than a destructive power that repeats old mistakes regarding human beings. Although we are unable to alter the past, we can see it for what it was and not behave in the same old way when we know better.

The website for the Peace Abbey (peaceabbey.org), specifically the Native Land Preservation Action page, provides further explanation for this movement, as well as a form for those who own land and wish to commit themselves to being some of the solution. This step by landowners reconnects us, wherever we are

in this country, to native peoples, the land itself which has become our land as well, and to a vision of a moral government that regards human beings as intrinsically valuable.