

**Permanent Board Meeting
Held over Zoom Video Conference
June 26, 2021**

21-49: Opening Worship

Friends opened with a period of worship. The clerk reminded us of the anniversary of the Stonewall Riot this weekend and of the importance of finding a faith community that is welcoming and affirming of the LGBTQIA+ community. We continue the work of becoming a welcoming community to all seekers and we celebrate the presence of those Friends who might not feel welcome elsewhere.

21-50: Roll Call

The recording clerk called the roll:

Present: Leslie Manning, Clerk; Hannah Zwirner Forsythe, Recording Clerk; Peter Bishop, Deana Chase, Darcy Drayton, Chris Gant, Beth Hansen, Ian Harrington, Rebecca Leuchak, Fran Lightsom, Ed Mair, Christopher McCandless, Jean McCandless, Gina Nortonsmith, Bob O'Connor, Carole Rein, John Reuthe, Martha Schwope, Sara Smith, Will Taber, Bill Walkauskas, Diane Weinholtz, Donn Weinholtz, Morgan Wilson, Kathleen Wooten, Tom Vargo, Mary Zwirner

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

Visitors: Polly Attwood, Gail Charpentier, Marian Dalton, Susan Davies, Sarah Gant, Elizabeth Hacala, Mey Hasbrook, Janet Hough, Becky Jones, Kathy Malin, LouAnne McDonald, Aaron Sakulich, LVM Shelton, Diana White, Honor Woodrow

Regrets: Kim Allen, Travis Belcher, Martin Zwirner Forsythe, Anna Raddochia, Elizabeth Szatkowski

21-51: Approval of the May Minutes

The minutes from the May meeting were distributed for review. With small corrections the minutes were approved.

21-52: Presiding Clerk's Report

Bruce Neumann, Presiding Clerk, submitted a written report with updates on his recent work. The report is appended.

21-53: Recommendations on Yearly Meeting Secretary's Sabbatical

Bruce Neumann, Presiding Clerk, brought a recommendation from Coordinating and Advisory (C&A) on the guidelines for the YM Secretary's sabbatical. That recommendation is appended. It includes three proposed actions for the Permanent Board's consideration:

- Authorize payment of the YM Secretary's full salary during his sabbatical (expected to occur during FY22). This may require drawing on reserves.
- Suggest that the Personnel Resource Group consider a formal and permanent recommendation to this effect.
- Suggest that the Finance Committee incorporate a line item such that funds for the fully-supported sabbaticals are accumulated over a period of year.

Given current reserves, the treasurer believes this proposal could be funded without negative impacts to the YM.

Friends asked questions about the ways Noah might spend his time on sabbatical and were overwhelmingly supportive of this proposal, and of Noah taking a sabbatical.

Friends approved this proposal.

21-54: Sessions Committee Purposes, Procedures, and Composition

Bruce Neumann brought a rewritten Purposes, Procedures, and Composition (PPC) document for the Sessions Committee. That document is appended. In the process of rewriting, Coordinating and Advisory looked at the structure of the Sessions Committee and how the planning process for Sessions can best be served by the committee. This rewrite significantly restructures the Sessions Committee in the hopes of being both more efficient in the various aspects of planning, and more faithful in listening to the needs of our community. Though the document is more detailed than the previous PPC for Sessions committee it is not intended to describe all of the work that goes into the planning for Sessions.

Friends raised a number of concerns with a common theme of inclusion: the role of volunteers is paired down in this PPC document, the role of Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness working group is not named as part of the planning process, and how we plan for accessibility at our events is also not named.

We heard clearly the need for all to feel included in the planning process for our events. We are also reminded that this document is not intended to name all participants in the planning process or all tasks to be completed. Sometimes there is work going on that isn't described and laid out in full. That doesn't always mean that something has been forgotten.

Given the concerns raised, further consideration of the Sessions Committee PPC is postponed until a later meeting.

21-55: Moses Brown Report and Nominations

Dawn Tripp, clerk of the Committee for Nurturing Friends Education at Moses Brown (CNFEMB), shared a brief report about the last year of the committee's work with Moses Brown.

Dawn presented an update to the Moses Brown bylaws which allows for remote participation in Moses Brown Board meetings. The details of this change are appended. Friends approved the change to the Moses Brown bylaws.

Dawn presented a nomination to the Moses Brown Board and several nominations for the CNFEMB. These nominations are made by the committee and have been approved by the Moses Brown Board, pending approval from the Permanent Board.

Zona Douthit as the Friend Nominee to be a Trustee of the Moses Brown Board

Zona Douthit to serve on CNFEMB

Megan Smith to serve on CNFEMB

Friends approved these nominations.

Dawn also presented a recommendation about the clerkship of the committee. David Bourns has agreed to serve as the new clerk of CNFEMB but has requested to ease into the position. Dawn has agreed to continue serving as clerk of the committee, with the assistance of Mike McGuigan (the outgoing Friends Coordinator), while David transitions into the role as clerk.

Friends approved David Bourns as the new clerk and of the transitional period in the clerking role.

21-56: Friends Camp Update and Nomination

John Reuthe, clerk of Friends Camp Committee, updated the Permanent Board on activities at Friends Camp. Children were welcomed to camp this week and though the structure of camp will look different this year we are thrilled to be running the Camp in person this year.

Natalie Bornstein was introduced as the nominee for Assistant Clerk of the Camp committee. The role of Assistant Clerk was created to allow for the training and orientation of the next clerk before they assume the full clerking role.

Friends approved this nomination.

21-57: Secretary's Report

Noah Merrill, YM Secretary, shared an oral report on his work since our last meeting.

After 16 months of sprinting through the worst of the pandemic, Noah reflected on discussions about how to rest. He is encouraging the staff to take time off and thinking about his upcoming sabbatical. As we reenter the world changed by the experience of the pandemic we need to find ways to “return to normal” while giving ourselves space to breathe.

Noah brought an informal request to take a sabbatical beginning somewhere after Oct 1, 2021, to return sometime in February 2022, being gone for about 4 months. A formal request including details about the exact dates of his absence and who will be responsible for the various parts of his work are being discussed and will be shared at our next meeting.

Friends approved the date range for Noah’s sabbatical.

21-58: Challenging White Supremacy Working Group Report

Susan Davies, clerk of Challenging White Supremacy Working Group (CWS), spoke to the written report from the meetings of CWS with members of Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness Working Group (NPWG) and the Permanent Board. That report is appended.

CWS does not propose specific actions at the moment; their report is a reflection on the conversations the group has had, their observations on the condition of the Yearly Meeting and noticed patterns of oppression and faithfulness working in the YM.

CWS requested to be laid down in their report to the PB at the March meeting. Our limited discussion on the report from CWS revealed a longstanding tension in discussion of challenging topics in the YM between wanting to take action and not wanting to push the YM beyond its compass. We seek not to outrun our guide but also not to wait for a comfortable invitation to a conversation that requires a level of discomfort.

21-59: Board of Managers of Pooled Funds Report

Kathy Malin, clerk of the Board of Managers of the Pooled Funds, shared an update on NEYM assets in the pooled funds.

The Board of Managers continues its work on transparency in reporting and sharing information about how our funds are invested.

There are many openings on the committee and the Board of Managers hopes that a more diverse group of Friends will consider joining the committee.

Friends had the opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns.

21-60: Proposal on Endowment Funds

At the May Permanent Board meeting Bob Murray, Treasurer, shared a proposal to amend the Funds Policy for the use of rollover income from our endowment funds.

The Treasurer requests that the Permanent Board approve a change to the Funds Policy to remove this statement dealing with endowment funds:

“Unspent income shall be reinvested in the fund where it originated unless the fund’s governing instrument instructs otherwise,”

and replace it with:

“Any unspent income remaining in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall remain spendable in the following fiscal year, unless the fund’s governing instrument instructs otherwise. The Treasurer will notify the designated NEYM spending authority and/or the Permanent Board if there is a pattern of unspent funds being built up in a particular fund over a period of years.”

In accordance with proper procedure, this proposed change was given preliminary approval at the May meeting and returned to this meeting for final approval, allowing time for discernment and for concerns to be raised. There being no objections the Permanent Board approved the change to the Funds Policy.

21-61: Laying down of Working Group on Call to Urgent Loving Action

In the advanced documents the Permanent Board received a report from the working group on the Call to Urgent Loving Action. That report is appended. The working group believes their task is complete and that continued work on the Call to Urgent Loving Action is best done in the monthly meetings. The working group requests to be laid down.

Friends approved laying down the working group with appreciation for the ways they have supported discussions on this topic throughout the Yearly Meeting.

21-62: Memorial Minutes

The memorial minutes received by the Permanent Board over the course of the year will be forwarded to Sessions for the Memorial Meeting. Friends approve.

21-63: Closing Worship

Friends closed with a period of worship. We will meet again on July 17th via Zoom.

Proposal: Next Steps in Sabbatical Planning

At its meeting on June 26, 2021, the Permanent Board approved that the Yearly Meeting Secretary, Noah Merrill, would take a sabbatical from his service for four months, within the timeframe of October 2020 to February 2021. Since that time, further planning has proceeded, and we are now ready to bring forward a recommendation regarding **continuity of service** while the Secretary is away.

With the support of Coordinating & Advisory Committee, the Secretary recommends that the responsibilities of the Secretary role be divided between two Friends with complementary gifts, experience, skills, and positions within the Yearly Meeting: Sarah Gant (Beacon Hill, MA, Friends Meeting) and Nia Thomas (Northampton, MA, Friends Meeting).

Sarah is the immediate past clerk of the Permanent Board, bringing more than 12 years' experience as a member of the Board. She has served in a variety of governance, pastoral care, and oversight roles among New England Friends, both locally and regionally, for more than 30 years. Most recently, Sarah clerked the Ad Hoc Working Group on Ministry & Spiritual Life, and serves as part of the Ministry Transition Team.

Nia currently serves as part of the Yearly Meeting staff in the role of Quaker Practice & Leadership Facilitator. She previously served as Young Friends and Young Adult Friends Coordinator, and clerked the Clerking Practices & Structures Working Group (2019). She serves in a variety of leadership roles in her local meeting, and is the parent of a young child. In her current role, she works actively in our youth ministries, nominating, spiritual formation, and training work. Nia has been charged with playing a key role in the Yearly Meeting's work developing inclusive leadership. Since March 2020, Nia has co-hosted frequent calls for local meeting leaders, and provides support for local meetings in a wide variety of ways.

While many details remain to be discerned and worked out, the substance of the recommendation is reflected in the proposed text below.

Draft text for consideration:

The Permanent Board appoints Nia Thomas (Northampton, MA, Friends Meeting) and Sarah Gant (Beacon Hill, MA, Friends Meeting) to temporarily assume and share the responsibilities of the Secretary during his coming sabbatical.

Nia Thomas will serve with the temporary title of *Acting Secretary for Programs*, with primary responsibility and oversight for program and staff supervision, communications, finances, and development. Sarah Gant will serve as *Acting Secretary for Pastoral Care and Governance*, with primary responsibility and oversight for care for local meetings and the pastoral needs of Friends, legal matters, policy, and institutional governance. Both Nia and Sarah will serve as members of Coordinating & Advisory Committee during this period, will meet regularly

together for mutual support and coordination, and will participate in meetings of the Permanent Board.

In support of this work, Nia Thomas and Sarah Gant are authorized to be added as additional signers, if needed, for bank accounts of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, effective immediately. To this end, their names should also be added to the bank resolutions minute for fiscal year 2022.

Further details, priorities, and plans will be clarified in the coming months, in consultation with the Yearly Meeting Secretary, Coordinating & Advisory Committee, the Yearly Meeting staff, and other partners as needed.

**Report to Permanent Board
From the Presiding Clerk
July 17, 2021**

Sessions planning continues - A Worship Coordinator has been appointed to have care of how various worship opportunities are supported, and a Black, Indigenous, People Of Color Coordinator has been appointed to have care of BIPOC spaces. We are in the midst of planning the opening (and considering the closing) celebrations; and are hoping soon to finalize what worship on Sunday morning will look like. Stay-tuned!

Purpose, Procedure, and Composition documents:

C&A has just considered, and is presenting a **P,P,&C for Finance committee**. If approved here, it will be part of the unity agenda at sessions, along with other such docs we have approved.

The small group which worked on drafting a new **Purpose, Procedure, and Composition for Sessions Planning**, met again and considered some of the feedback from the last Permanent Board meeting, after which, Coordinating and Advisory considered it again and made a few more edits. Note that if approved here, this document will be brought to Sessions, but not as part of the Unity agenda, it will be part of a PB presentation.

I want to reflect on why we are presenting a thorough re-design of the process. The Clerking Structures and Practices working group report to Sessions 2019 asked C&A to *“pay attention to how committee structures can best facilitate effectiveness in the work of our Yearly Meeting”* so, in our regular review of P,P,&C documents, particularly given the changes in actual practice wrought by the pandemic, it seemed a good time for a deeper look at how we want to go about this work.

In our consideration we noted that the old model of a large volunteer-based committee pre-dates staff positions of not just Events Coordinator and Quaker Leadership and Practice facilitator, but goes back to before the position of YM secretary was established. (remember, Jonathan Vogel-Borne was Field Secretary during most of his tenure). Christopher McCandless has pointed out time and again, that the long shift in family working dynamics has increasingly had an influence in our ability to run things entirely on volunteer labor.

But we also recognized that planning sessions is a dance between consideration of what Friends need and want from a spiritual and community perspective; and the myriad details of what structures and supports to put in place to accomplish those goals. Sessions planning, then, needs both reflection and execution. And we note that the reflection part is weighted towards the beginning of the process, increasingly moving into details as we get closer to the event. And execution of details are the things that we have seen that staff are more consistent at following through on.

Based on input from PB, we have added a Worship Coordinator position to the Program team, and a Noticing Patterns person to the Coordination team. We believe that each of these perspectives will add an important viewpoint to the on-going work. We are also sharing a graphic which hints at the wide

range of other participation in Sessions planning, both volunteers and stipended non-staff positions. Many hands and hearts are involved!

And I'll note that while it seems like there's a lot of detail here, much of the document is concerned with how we reflect on what's important, both in considering the spiritual condition of the body, and how we embrace the concern of being welcoming to all.

Bruce Neumann

Purpose, Procedure, and Composition of Finance Committee *Revised 2021*

Purpose

The Yearly Meeting Finance Committee stewards the financial resources at all levels of the Yearly Meeting (YM). This involves care for the intake and expenditure of money through the development of an annual budget, the establishment of policies for the faithful and transparent carrying out of that care, and the communication of this to the wider body of New England Yearly Meeting. The Finance Committee serves as a resource on good practice in financial management for monthly and quarterly meetings and other groups under the care of NEYM. By providing consultation, education, and resources to treasurers and others, the committee seeks to assist in the effective stewardship of monthly, quarterly, and Yearly Meeting financial and property resources.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
Matthew 6:21

Procedures

- The Committee provides oversight, advice, and support to the Treasurer as well as any others who may be responsible for sub-accounts within the YM operating funds.
- The Committee reviews and recommends updates to the job descriptions of the YM Treasurer.
- The Committee consults with Nominating Committee about that committee's nomination for Treasurer.
- The Committee generally meets every few months, including meeting at Annual Sessions. Meeting times and places are determined by the Clerk in consultation with the Committee.
- The Committee may designate sub-committees to organize and perform certain tasks, the results to be brought before the full committee for action. Budget is the only sub-committee that currently exists.

- Early in the calendar year, the Committee begins the development of a draft budget for the ensuing fiscal year. This is done in consultation with the Treasurer, YM Secretary, and others. The YM Secretary is responsible for estimating expenses for the YM staff and office, Youth Retreat Programs, and Annual Sessions. The Committee takes into account the financial priorities recommended by the Permanent Board.
- The Committee solicits specific input from the YM Secretary and others regarding the estimated capacity within the YM community for contributions and from the YM Secretary regarding estimated expenses and revenue for Annual Sessions in developing the draft budget.
- The Committee solicits budget requests from all YM committees to support the work of those committees.
- The Committee presents the YM budget to the Permanent Board at its May meeting for information and feedback.
- The Committee presents the final YM budget to Annual Sessions for final approval. Between Annual Sessions, budget updates and any necessary requests for action are presented to the Permanent Board.
- The Committee annually prepares a minute authorizing designated individuals to sign checks, open and close accounts, and otherwise manage the financial “housekeeping” of the YM. Sessions approves this minute.
- The Committee conducts workshops on various financial topics and fields specific questions from monthly meeting officers on managing monthly meeting finances.
- The Committee will from time to time review YM policies in financial matters and make recommendations to the Permanent Board for continuation, discontinuation, or adjustment of those policies.

The Committee maintains a handbook documenting the policies and procedures of YM financial matters, regularly reviewing and updating it as needed. A detailed description of how the Friends Camp budget is handled appears in the Friends Camp Good governance document.

Composition

Finance Committee composition is as follows:

- Up to 10 members are appointed by the Yearly Meeting for terms of up to five years. In consultation with the Nominating Committee, members may be re-appointed for a second consecutive 5-year term. While not required for Friends to make a significant contribution to this work, longer terms of service recognize the detailed context of this work, and support greater continuity and institutional memory on the committee.
- The Treasurer, Accounts Manager, and Yearly Meeting Secretary are ex-officio members.

Committee members do not necessarily need any prior experience with accounting or financial management, but should be comfortable (or interested in learning how to become comfortable) looking at, talking about, and praying over both specific numbers as well as broader policy matters concerning the finances of the Yearly Meeting. Committee members should be able to notice and be willing to ask tough questions when numbers don't seem to make sense or add up. All members are expected to relate financial matters to Divine guidance and Quaker principles.

Additionally, while no single member is expected to bring all of the following to the Committee's work, the Committee as a whole will, ideally, possess at least two informed perspectives on the following topic areas: (a) each area of work done by the Yearly Meeting as an organization; (b) Yearly Meeting governance procedures, and (c) common principles of financial management. The Committee also needs one or more members possessing the necessary skill and energy to (a) use charts, spreadsheets, and financial management software; and (b) draft policy proposals when it becomes clear our policies or procedures should be changed.

In order to fulfill God's will for the Yearly Meeting in financial matters, the Finance Committee aims to be representative of the wide range of Friends that make up NEYM. Recognizing the importance of sharing power in financial decisions with those whose voices are often marginalized, the Finance Committee aims to be diverse in age, gender, race, sexual orientation, class, and any other identities that are less privileged.

The Clerk of Finance Committee serves ex-officio on the Coordinating and Advisory Committee, on Permanent Board, and on the Board of Managers.

Purpose, Procedure, and Composition of Sessions Planning

Purpose:

The Sessions planning team exists to plan the schedule and events that make up the annual gathering of Friends in New England. The various events which comprise our annual sessions should reflect a careful consideration of the spiritual condition of the wider body, considering where there is life, where there is not, where there are breakthroughs, patterns and examples of the Spirit; what needs careful attention and care, and what needs lifting up and celebrating.

The purpose of Annual Sessions is understood to be the following:

Friends gather at Annual Sessions to encourage the ministry and spiritual life of the Religious Society of Friends in New England. We seek to gather in ways that are intergenerational, welcoming, and inclusive. We seek to share our experience of how the Spirit is moving, and the ways it is impeded, to learn from each other, to discern how God is leading us as a People, and to experience Divine Love as it appears in our midst and is revealed in our relationships.

We respond to this purpose through: worship, meetings for corporate discernment, workshops, and opportunities for connection, training, fellowship, play, and celebration. At the heart of these events are the meetings for worship with attention to business where we discern how God is leading us as a people.

We seek to plan Sessions in alignment with NEYM's discerned and minuted commitments, including those to anti-racism (2003), challenging white supremacy (2016), and addressing climate change (2018, 2020).

Note: The graphic below, prepared by Elizabeth Hacala is to help in visualizing how the many pieces of Sessions planning will work together. While quite complete, for this year, it is not intended to be authoritative or to be used as a guide for what roles are needed each year. It will not be part of the "permanent" Purpose, Procedure, and Composition document, if approved.



Procedures:

- Throughout the planning, Friends are charged with removing barriers to participation and increasing accessibility for all Friends, paying attention to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, class, ability and care-taking responsibilities (i.e. those parenting or doing elder or personal care). Planning teams are asked to be mindful, regularly using the following queries in their planning:

How is this program/event/communication accessible? To whom? How is this program/event/communication inaccessible? To whom? How can we make this program/event/communication more accessible? What identities are being centered in how we have planned this program/event/communication? What identities are not centered in how we have planned this program/event/communication? How do we know?

- Sessions planning will occur by designated groups with differing primary functions, which work will be overseen and coordinated by the Sessions Coordination Team. In addition to more general oversight and coordination, the Sessions Coordination Team will draft an overall Sessions schedule for input by the other functional groups. The Coordination Team also gives final approval to the overall Sessions schedule, and to any needed changes. The coordination team holds the concern for bringing an intergenerational

focus to Sessions planning.

- Theme and Speakers Team: This group discerns the theme for the following year's Sessions, and Speakers. It is clerked by the Sessions Clerk.
 - Program Team: Focuses on Adult programming, typically including Business meetings, Plenary, Worship, Bible half-hours, small group opportunities, workshops, etc. Clerked by Sessions Clerk.
 - Logistics Team: The Logistics Team will translate specific needs of Adult and Youth programs into physical (room size and numbers), communication (including advance docs, newsletters), and administrative (registration and housing) needs. Clerked by Events Coordinator.
 - Youth Programs Team: Focuses on the programming that will be offered for youth at Sessions, including needs of families and youth, and recruitment of staff. This group will be convened by the Events Coordinator.
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- In September of each year, the Coordination Team, the Theme and Speakers Team, and any others they choose to invite will meet to consider the Sessions which just happened. They will consider sessions evaluation forms as well as personal experience, to learn from the recent event. What went well, what challenges were there? What changes might be useful or necessary? How was the spiritual life of Friends in New England nourished and encouraged? How was the life and experience of monthly meetings considered and supported? What work and learning is not yet finished that should be carried over into next year's Sessions? The conclusions from this gathering should be the foundation and touchstone for all aspects of planning for the coming year. This meeting will be convened and clerked by the Sessions Clerk. The meeting should include those involved in the previous year's planning who are not otherwise continuing in service.
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- Following this meeting, the Theme & Speakers team should meet to consider: their sense of the spiritual condition of the body of Friends who attended (informed by the meeting described above); their sense of how Spirit is moving (or impeded) in the wider body; and wider input, on both potential theme and suggested speakers. This team should distill that sense to a few words or a phrase for the theme, which will be a simple reflection of the work they believe the body needs.
 - This team will then consider what guests should be invited to speak to the gathered body. While most often over the years we have had a plenary speaker on Sunday, and a Bible Half-hour presenter, this group may be led to suggest a different configuration.
 - This team should present the suggested theme and proposed speakers to the Coordination team for approval. The Sessions Clerk should report these to PB for their awareness. Approval by PB is not necessary
 - Upon approval by the Coordination Team, the Presiding Clerk, with support as needed from the Events Coordinator, will contact proposed speakers to formally invite them. Upon their acceptance, the Presiding Clerk will hand off

responsibility to the Events Coordinator, who will ensure appropriate follow up and connections with Friends as needed in order to confirm elders and make all other arrangements for their service

- Once the theme, speakers, and elders are confirmed, this team (excepting the Presiding Clerk and the Sessions Clerk) can consider that their work is done for the year

- The Coordination Team may meet occasionally, as needed, through the fall and winter months.

- Beginning in earnest by March, the functional teams and the Coordination team should begin to meet regularly to translate the perceived needs into specific events and fit those events into a schedule. Events should include:

- Opportunities to gather in worship

- Business meetings

- Opportunities for learning

- Opportunities for sharing and relationship-building

- Opportunities for performance, celebrations, special events, and play

- In consultation with the Coordination Team and with approval of the YM Secretary, a variety of stipended positions may be established to hold a particular piece of work, (e.g. registrar, housing coordinator, worship coordinator, tech team lead, BIPOC Opportunities Coordinator). Stipended positions will participate in the appropriate functional team, and will be supported by the appropriate staff person, as identified in their role description.

- The NEYM Office Manager will set the schedule for required submissions, including invitation to sessions, program schedule for publication, advance documents, etc. • The YM Secretary has ultimate responsibility for and oversight of implementation, logistics, financial management, liability, pastoral care, legal, and safety concerns for Annual Sessions.

Composition:

A Sessions Clerk will be nominated by the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee. This individual will clerk the Coordination team, the Program Team, and the Theme and Speakers Team. This person will work closely with the Events Coordinator, creating the planning schedule and the agendas for planning meetings in consultation with the coordination team. This person will hold an overview of the planning process and will facilitate significant decisions, where the Events Coordinator will be more involved in the implementation of those decisions.

Regular participants in each of the following groups will likely include the roles below, but may change based on experience and needs, and will often include the invited participation of other Friends depending on needs for consultation, discernment, and implementation. The Session Clerk, the Presiding Clerk, the Events Coordinator, and the YM Secretary will consult on changes in composition or process that may be needed.

The Program Team consists of the Yearly Meeting Secretary, the Presiding Clerk, the Sessions Clerk, the Worship Coordinator, the Events Coordinator, the Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator, and a member of the youth ministries staff.

The Logistics Team consists of The Events Coordinator, the Office Manager, and the Tech Team Lead, and the Sessions Clerk

The Youth Programs Team consists of the Events Coordinator, the Junior Yearly Meeting/Junior High Yearly Meeting Coordinator, the Young Friends Event Organizer, and the Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator.

The Theme and Speakers Team consists of the Presiding Clerk, the Sessions Clerk and 4-6 other Friends chosen by the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee, both for their connectedness to the wider body of Friends, and their ability to prayerfully listen to those Friends' condition.

The Coordination Team consists of representatives from each of the other teams, plus a consistent representative from the Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness working Group.

**Report to Permanent Board from the *Ad-hoc* anti-racism workgroup,
(members of Challenging White Supremacy, Noticing Patterns and Permanent Board)
July 17, 2021**

Purpose, Background and Policy:

At its March 20, 2021 meeting the Permanent Board requested that an *ad-hoc* workgroup comprised of members of Challenging White Supremacy wg (CWS), Permanent Board (PB), and Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness wg (NP wg) meet to explore how to proceed with the recommendation brought by CWS to the March 20th meeting: In short, that recommendation was that NEYM affirm (in a minute or some different process) *“that Friends in NEYM intend and aspire for our Yearly Meeting to become an Anti-Racist Faith Community.”* This report shares some of the diverse ways we each have tried to faithfully hold this concern and brings recommendations for how the Yearly Meeting might continue to live into this aspiration.

We note that NEYM *has already made a clear commitment to anti-racism* – Sessions approved the following minute in 2003.

New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends affirms its commitment to becoming an open, affirming, anti-racist Religious Society. Our understanding of racism is that it is a system that accords advantage or disadvantage based on racial identity. Racism is fundamentally inconsistent with the divine guidance that has led our Religious Society to testimonies such as Equality, Peace and Community. We seek divine assistance and the help of other friends of Truth to examine our individual and corporate complicity in racism. We aspire to a more perfect union with the Author of all, who shows no partiality in the diversity of creation.
(second paragraph is not included here)

Review of workgroup activities:

1. In preparation for convening the larger group meeting, CWS met on April 19th with four members of NP wg who had all attended the 3/20/21 PB meeting.
2. The full workgroup has met 3 times since then, with Friends from CWS, PB and NP wg.
3. Because CWS initiated this concern, the Clerk of CWS, Susan Davies, has been serving as acting clerk of this *ad hoc* working group. The *ad hoc* working group has received, from some seasoned members, the sense that we can best serve the work by shepherding it to its next phase. Our group did not include all the voices that should be present when discerning the next significant steps for NEYM, and only a few of us have participated or coordinated deep anti-oppression change plans before. We heard that the change work we need to engage in is iterative and adaptive, and is not something we can fully map out or predict in advance.
4. Because NEYM affirmed its intention in 2003 to become an antiracist faith organization the PB antiracism wg does not see the need for another minute stating that we wish to “be anti-racist”.
5. Our June 26th, 2021 report to PB records the diverse insights, noticings and perspectives shared within the workgroup and reflects the current status of our discernment
(*Excerpt appended to the end of this report; see PB minutes of June 26 for the full report*).

Going Forward:

Important work has been in evidence in NEYM in recent years from various working groups and committees. For example, a partial list: *Racial, Social and Economic Justice Committee, Earthcare Ministry, Resource Group on Right Relationship with Indigenous Peoples and the Letter of Apology to Native Peoples, Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness, Israel-Palestine wg, Decolonizing Quakers, Challenging White Supremacy wg, Youth-led programs emphasis on racial justice and healing, monthly meeting initiatives, eg, at Beacon Hill Friends House, Mount Toby, Hartford, among many others.*

NEYM has a fruitful history of cross-committee gatherings, or consultations, among some, but not all, of the various anti-oppression groups. These consultations have resulted in improved communications, understanding, and coordination of priorities and initiatives, and an enlarged sense of the concerns that must be held.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the NEYM Permanent Board invite and support a consultation in the fall of 2021, to include a wide range of voices and experiences that have not yet been heard, particularly youth, more BIPOC Friends, and Friends working on anti-racism at the MM level. The fullest range of voices is needed to develop a vision and next steps for anti-racism work in NEYM. This further consultation is a logical outgrowth of our previously stated commitments as a Yearly Meeting (2003, 2016, 2020), our history of past beneficial consultations, and the learning achieved as part of our initial living into those commitments. We envision the consultation would lead to a plan that would come back to Sessions in 2022 for approval by the body. We recommend that this consultation happen via Zoom over two weekends to make it accessible to as many Friends as possible (and to minimize Zoom fatigue).

APPENDED: EXCERPT OF ANTI-RACISM WG REPORT TO JUNE 26TH, 2021 PB MEETING

**Report to Permanent Board from the Ad-hoc anti-racism workgroup,
(members of Challenging White Supremacy, Noticing Patterns and Permanent Board)
June 26, 2021**

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After our June 17th, 2021 meeting one Friend offered the following observations of patterns and possible responses that might help. We encourage those reading this list to hear this as a dialogue among patterns, not separating each one out, but working across them, to see a larger context:

Pattern: People experience harm and, depending on who they are, they do, or don't, get support in the repair work needed.

Possible action: We identify a process for holding space for and healing harm when it is done that supports those harmed (and doesn't expect them to do all the emotional labor of teaching & managing the process while they are also trying to process their pain from the harm done). We will need this if we are truly to address white supremacy and racism among us

Pattern: When there is a working group or a committee holding the work, some things happen, when the working group or committee is no longer holding the work, it dwindles (for example,

the Working Group on Racism, under care of M&C, wrote and worked on the 2003 minute and was laid down a few years later).

Possible action: There needs to be a group charged with helping us all live into the 2003 minute

Pattern: Minutes that we get excited about at Sessions and come to unity to approve don't always have legs beyond Sessions (2003 antiracism minute, 2013 Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery, 2019 minute on Climate Change, etc.) *

Possible action: We need a way keep these minutes alive in both our work between Sessions and in anchoring our work during Sessions (vertical and horizontal integration)

*** One Friend responded to this noticing of a pattern in this way:** *"This does not match my perception when we have passed minutes at Sessions. My take on the 2013 minute of Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery is that it has had legs. There may have been no immediate actions but it seems to me that it was like a seed that was planted and it was growing out of our sight. It has been mentioned in our work on the Letter of Apology. It was a seed of awareness that was planted and when we came back to working on our relationship with Native Americans, the awareness of the history of the Doctrine of Discover was already present among us so that we have been able to proceed with a greater understanding of the larger historical context. Are we too impatient for immediate results that we do not appreciate the value of slow growing seeds?"*

Pattern: We don't quite know what to do and are also not in unity to ask for outside/expert guidance or help.

Possible action: Find and use internal expertise OR seek consultation from outside expertise around developing a process for moving forward

Pattern: The process needed to delve into deeper anti-racism work is not linear nor prescriptive so it is hard to envision or plan at this stage.

Possible action: Develop some shared vision and find Friends who have experience with iterative/adaptive change processes to support this work (for example, *Emergent Strategy* by adrienne maree brown provides an intro to this kind of process work)

The current group cares about this issue deeply, but is not the full group to carry this work forward (young people are missing, composition is mostly voluntary, etc.)

Possible action: Take some time to think about the composition needed to carry this work forward, and then form a new committee/working group

Pattern: We haven't done much and feel crummy about it.

Possible action: Concretely identify what has happened on the YM level, as well as the work around the MMs, and then look at how we build on our strengths and identify the areas we need to address.

Pattern: We talk a lot, write some minutes, and then

Possible action: Using the list from the point above identify action steps that have worked well recently and replicate/build on them

Another Friend observed:

"Racism is the greatest of our oppressions, but it is only one. I would like us to become an anti-oppression yearly meeting. The definition of anti-racism is not as important as living into

practices that will build the Realm of God, the beloved community. It is both interior and exterior work. That means that I need to transform myself, to be more humble, to see clearly the harm being done, and to listen more deeply. We do not need to look at things as all good or bad, or to beat ourselves up. For me, I need to see the nuances and complexities. I need to see where my work, in my little areas of influence, can make the world a better place, especially for people who have traditionally been oppressed."

And another Friends observed:

"...from Lao Tzu, "Have faith in those who are faithful. Have faith in those who are unfaithful, because faith is a virtue." I realized that I have been judging myself because there is no star of Bethlehem over my head. This does not mean that I am unfaithful, or that I am faithful. I just do the best I can and take the next step. I am learning to let go of setting goals and I focus on what needs to be changed right here, at this current moment. What does this moment need? Most of my learning is unlearning. I get in trouble when I make assumptions. Be as a child. Let your faith be as a child. To do the right thing is not to do something wise or well-reasoned or clever. What matters is that I listen, then listen some more, and do what seems right in that moment, not what seems right in the final plan. I am grateful for this opportunity to work with the Noticing Patterns group, and the current clerks table which is willing to work in uncertainty and learning all that will have to be let go."

Another Friend observed:

I feel like a beginner but, or so, I keep seeking experiences to stretch me. I have had plenty of opportunities to role model making mistakes and owning them without defensiveness. This keeps me coming back. I don't want to not do things because I am afraid. Being part of a group helps me. Seeing the YM engage in this work encourages me.

The meager evidence of action disappoints and discourages some: why does NEYM seem incapable of taking any big, bold action? Other Friends lift up the need for humility, stamina and persistence, and striving to cooperate faithfully in the slow work of Grace. It is not about doing something different but being something different. Out of this will come a different thing. The structures are impenetrable until we have become something else, and then they will change because we have changed.

A Friend offered that a piece of the work is about framing the work that needs to be done, understanding that the YM has needs at different levels. Some of the work is urgent, some is intangible and we do not know when the seeds will sprout. Can we find a framework that has openings at the various levels of need in the yearly meeting? How can we call each other to be committed?

Report of Internal Nominating Committee
July 17, 2021

Clerk of Permanent Board

The Internal Nominating Committee recommends that the term of Leslie Manning to be Clerk of Permanent Board be extended for one year to end at Sessions in August of 2023. Leslie finds herself clear to accept this extension. It will mean that we will not have both the NEYM Presiding Clerk and the clerk of Permanent Board changing in the same year which will provide for greater continuity of leadership.

Nominating Committee

The Internal Nominating Committee recommends that Susan Vargo of Northampton Meeting be appointed to the NEYM Nominating Committee for a term ending in 2022. She already serves on the Nominating Committee as a representative of her monthly meeting and this appointment will allow her to continue to serve if the proposed reorganization of the Nominating Committee is approved at Sessions.

We also recommend that Honor Woodrow of Framingham Meeting be appointed to the Nominating Committee for a 3 year term ending in 2024. Honor has a gift for identifying and naming gifts in people. She is excited at the prospect of serving on a nominating committee that sees identifying and naming gifts to be a major aspect of its work.

Clerks Table Nominating Committee

Clerks Table Nominating brings forward the name of Peter Bishop to serve one more year as Recording Clerk. We do not yet have a name to bring forward for reading clerk to replace Gina Nortonsmith.

Judy Goldberger,
Clerk