

**New England Yearly Meeting
Permanent Board Meeting
Held over Zoom Video Conference
April 2, 2022**

PB 22-15: Opening Worship

Friends opened with a period of worship.

PB 22-16: Clerk's Welcome

The PB Clerk welcomed all to the Spring Edition of Permanent Board 2022, recalling the sacramental nature of Spring: a time of listening for God's will for our community. The Clerk encouraged participation in the practice of Noticing, noting that the Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness is a working group, but it is also a *practice*, that benefits from our practice of using the sentence stems:

"I feel..."; "I hear....". "I see...."; "I know..."; "I wonder...";

PB 22-17: Roll Call

The recording clerk called the roll:

Leslie Manning, PB Clerk; Susan Davies, PB Recording Clerk; Kimberly Allen, Deana Chase, Darcy Drayton, Chris Gant, Beth Hansen, Ian Harrington, Frances Lightsom, Ed Mair (present part time), Christopher McCandless, Jean McCandless, Bob O'Connor, Carole Rein, John Reuthe, Aaron Sakulich, Martha Schwope, Sara Smith, Elizabeth Szatkowski, Will Taber, Donn Weinholtz, Morgan Wilson, Kathleen Wooten,

Ex-Officio: Jeremiah Dickinson (M&C Clerk); Scot Drysdale (Finance Clerk); Rebecca Leuchak (Rising Presiding Clerk); Noah Merrill (YM Secretary); Robert Murray (Treasurer); Bruce Neumann (Presiding Clerk); Elizabeth Reuthe (Secretary's Supervisor);

Regrets: Travis Belcher, Peter Bishop, Hannah Zwirner Forsythe, Martin Zwirner Forsythe, Joyce Gibson, Gina Nortonsmith, Anna Raddochia, Jackie Stillwell; Bill Walkauskas, Diane Weinholtz; Mary Zwirner

Visitors: Polly Attwood; Melody Brazo; Beth Collea; Paul Kerr (AFSC, At Large); Marion Dalton; Sarah Gant; Mey Hasbrook; Janet Hough; Becky Jones; Frederick Martin; LouAnn McDonald; Lucy Meadow; Beth Morrill; Kathy Olsen; Scott Rhodewalt; LVM Shelton; Nia Thomas; Peter Woodrow; Eleanor Warnock; Diana White John Wojtowicz;

PB 22-18: Approval of January 29, 2022 PB Minutes

The minutes from the January 29, 2022 meeting were distributed in advance documents for review.

FRIENDS APPROVED THE MINUTES

PB 22-19: Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness working group (NPwg) report (report appended)

FRIENDS ACCEPTED THE NPwg REPORT OF THE FEB 7, 2022 PB DEBRIEF MEETING

PB 22-20: Presiding Clerk's Report (report appended)

In the Presiding Clerk's oral report he requested Sarah Gant share news of Yearly Meeting's involvement, with New York YM (NYYM) in a court case concerning religious freedom to worship and conduct business in Green Haven Correctional Facility. The Quaker meeting for worship was started in Green Haven Correctional Facility by Quaker members of an Alternatives to Violence program. Because the NY Department of Corrections was prohibiting inmates from conducting Meeting for Business for their small meeting NEYM recently joined an amicus brief with NYYM to petition for their religious freedom to do so. The case is likely to eventually go to the Supreme Court, with much excellent legal work having been done by lawyers from our Yearly Meeting and NYYM.

The PB Clerk asked that PB hold these Friends in the Light as they faithfully uphold the witness of Friends. In the spirit of "noticing a pattern" a Friend expressed gratitude for this example of tremendous work preparing excellent reports that inspire PB.

PB 22-21: NEYM Secretary's report (report appended)

The PB Clerk warmly welcomed Noah back from his sabbatical.

Noah greeted us with words given to him by Rich Holtschuh, a member of the southeast Vermont Abenaki community, when speaking about having a relationship to *place*. Rich said in the Abenaki language for the European phrase "I am grateful", is "*To be in the natural way*". Noah aligned his return to his work as NEYM Secretary with this sentiment. Sharing some of the wisdom gleaned from his time away he cautioned that we need to try to learn the wisdom of "Do Less".

The PB Clerk recused herself from discernment about a potential role for Permanent Board regarding a bequest left to Durham Friends Meeting, of which she is a member. The Presiding Clerk, Bruce Neuman clerked this item of business.

Noah Merrill explained that PB is the YM body authorized to deal with bequests. The Yearly Meeting Board of Managers (BoM) has asked that PB discern its potential role to see to disposition of a bequest left for Durham Friends Meeting (DFM). A member of Durham Friends left a generous bequest for DFM with the request that the BoM serve as trustees of the bequest. The BoM concluded they are not legally empowered to serve as trustees and suggested that DFM hold the funds directly.

The Yearly Meeting Secretary requests that PB approve to have the YM Secretary and NEYM General Counsel determine if and how to transfer the bequest for Durham's use. The request for approval is for the YM Secretary and YM General Counsel to prepare and execute an agreement to change the trustee from the BoM to DFM.

FRIENDS APPROVED

The YM Secretary expressed gratitude to Erik Philbrook, Rising Clerk of the BoM, for faithful stewardship of this question.

PB 22-22: NEYM Treasurer’s report (report appended)

Robert Murray, YM Treasurer, reported that the 1st Quarter “looks fine”. Revenues and expenses of YM vary from Quarter to Quarter. The Treasurer explained that some funds were previously approved to be released from reserves for support of volunteer leadership activities, and to support backfill for Secretary’s sabbatical. Additionally, the 2nd federal Paycheck Protection Program loan was forgiven thus freeing YM from this debt. Some of these funds will go to the Operating Division, and some will go into the Friends Camp budget.

PB 22-23: Update on Reserves (report appended)

Some years ago, there were concerns in YM about insufficient reserves. YM articulated the goal to have the reserve fund to hold ¼ of Yearly Meeting yearly expenses. Due to two significant positive infusions (forgiveness of the federal PPP loan, and a premium return of insurance expenses) the YM is now in the good position of having some excess reserves. YM proposes to use \$15k of the excess reserves for the Antiracism consultation. Additional “excess reserve” funds of approximately \$50k provide an opportunity to discern use of these funds.

A Friend expressed gratitude for clarity and simplicity of the reports and expressed appreciation for Catherine Clark who encouraged the Yearly Meeting to go with Friends Mutual Health, which this year, returned a sizable premium to the YM. The Treasurer expressed appreciation to Frederick Martin, Accounts Manager, who led the task of preparing the reports.

PB 22-24:PB Clerk’s pause for noticings

Polly Attwood, Clerk of the NPwg, posted the sentence stems in chat:

Core Sentence stems...

- I feel...
- I hear...
- I see...
- I know...
- I wonder . . .

Several Friends expressed specific appreciations and calls for prayer.

PB 22-25: NEYM Finance Committee report (report appended)

Scott Drysdale, YM Finance Committee Clerk (FCC), presented the first reading of the proposed budget with the announcement that we have a balanced budget.

Proposed Budget, first reading: This is a first reading of the budget. It will be coming back for approval. The FCC reported that much of the budget is a carry-over of assumptions from last year. The appended report itemizes assets released to and from reserves and indicates proposed new expenditures such as honoraria for volunteer positions, support of ministry in local meetings, and a 3.6% Cost of Living adjustment and a small merit increase for most staff.

PB 22-26: Financial Contributions WG Report- Lucy Meadows, on behalf of Financial Contributions wg
(report appended)

Reporting for the Financial Contributions working group (FCwg), Lucy Meadows explained that the Financial Contributions Working Group was formed by Permanent Board to “study the contributions we make as part of the annual operating budget.”

The FCwg provided suggested queries and detailed recommendations in their appended report.

During the discussion some Friends expressed concern that the proposed recommendations may result in a less transparent record, without the detail of contribution line items in the budget. Other Friends pointed out that the proposed new approach is helpful in that it disentangles the conundrum of allocation of funds *away* from the budget, and proposes that another body make the contribution decisions. It is also helpful in that it proposes regular, specific times to engage around the question of contributions. Queries raised during the discussion included:

- “What does it mean to be a member of these other organizations?”
- “How can Friends flexibly respond to needs in the world?”
- “What percent of our budget do we give away?”
- “Who do we feel called to give it to?”
- “Who are ‘we’ that are the people doing the giving? Are there Friends and neighbors close at hand who desperately need our help?”

The YM Secretary clarified important parts of the work—it is important to disentangle “the budget” from “**what really matters to us?**” If we did that work well it could add weight to why the budget looks like it does. The YM Secretary proposed that this year we carry over last year’s contributions but appoint another group to try to address these fundamental questions. YM has an opportunity at Sessions to invite Friends into spacious reflection on “What matters here?”. After that, PB could shepherd the more specific conversation through the coming year.

The PB clerk released the FCwg, at its request, with gratitude for its work.

FRIENDS AFFIRMED RELEASE OF THIS WORKING GROUP

The PB Clerk articulated a path forward for this work:

- Request that at Sessions the Presiding Clerk make an opportunity for a spacious discussion about some of the queries raised, e.g., “What does it mean to be Members of other organizations?”
- Further, PB might consider holding a consultation about our stewardship of contributions to other organizations.

The PB asked whether the PB affirmed this approach.

FRIENDS AGREED that PB should continue work on this concern and requested that the Presiding Clerk consider making a spacious time for deep reflection on the concern for how we use our financial resources.

Frederick Martin, the YM Accounts Manager, articulated a technical concern: how to present something that disengages the budget conversation from the deeper contributions question—but there's a technical question about what "the details of the budget, to be presented at Sessions, will look like".

PB clerk affirmed this question is important and will be addressed after the PB clerk and the Presiding Clerk check in with key participants.

PB 22-27: Sessions Waiver Request- Proposal to support family participation in Sessions 2022 (proposal appended)

Nia Thomas, YM Quaker Practice & Leadership Facilitator, presented information about the proposal to waive fees for children and youth under the age of 18. Nia reported that Sessions planners, staff, and Coordinating and Advisory (C&A) have been consulted in drafting the proposal. Main points of the proposal:

- Waive any fee for youth through high school
- If this results in a big impact to the budget we currently have reserves to help
- The focus of this year's sessions is intergenerational
- This year brings a significant youth ministry staff transition making strong youth participation especially important to encourage a successful year
- Can we afford it? Relatively speaking, this year minimizes the financial risk
- We're already investing in a lot of new volunteer orientation
- Messaging transparency, equalization is important— this is a message of welcome to families
- This is an investment- if kids come 1x they are very likely to want to return.

FRIENDS ENTHUSIASTICALLY APPROVED the 2022 Sessions fee waiver for youth

Reports from working groups and YM representatives to other organizations

PB 22-28 AFSC Report (report appended)

Peter Woodrow reported for the YM AFSC representatives. Peter acknowledged that there are some internal struggles in AFSC about "what the work is". The representatives report, and AFSC's current strategic plan proposal are appended.

Following the oral report, some Friends expressed confusion about the nature of the "internal struggles." The PB Clerk stated that it is important to be aware, but not to fix; we are called to hold AFSC in the Light. NEYM holds a powerful concern for the work of AFSC and its loss of operations throughout New England.

One Friend expressed the fervent hope, as YM sends representatives out to other organizations, that they carry some of the faith and practice that we embody here in NEYM, into the other organizations. Some of the lack of trust regarding AFSC reflects a concern for the spiritual grounding of the work, and a concern for YM involvement in AFSC to release a revitalization of the Life of the Spirit in that work.

PB 22-29 Friends United Meeting YM Representatives (oral report only)

Kristina Keefe-Perry reported for the three YM representatives to Friends United Meeting (FUM) board from NEYM.

FUM Program highlights–

- Ramallah has a new head of school who is dynamic and effective;
- Shawn & Katrina McConaughy have returned to North America, handing over partnerships to African staff;
- The North American field office is organizing assistance to the African diaspora, helping them find Quaker worship that is more aligned with the African style they are used to

The FUM Executive Board has met twice since these YM representatives were appointed. The meetings are short to take in many time zones from all over the world. YM representatives charge is to convene a mtg of representatives from other YMs to FUM, to plan for wider intervisitation and to encourage conversation to help move the board to change the personnel policy. Both a letter from YM FUM Representatives, and a YM letter from Bruce Neuman, YM Presiding Clerk, were brought up at a recent FUM board mtg. These communications asked the FUM Executive Board to grapple with how to create a real dialogue. FUM replied promptly, indicating that they plan to bring this subject to an upcoming Executive Board meeting and that they would be open to having a meeting between the FUM North American Clerks and NEYM Reps and the Presiding Clerk. They indicated they welcomed conversation, and they offered someone who wants to visit NEYM. The YM Representatives have also been in dialogue with a Friend who deeply understands the theological and FUM-cultural concerns. They are hoping to initiate an informal mtg with FUM reps from other yearly meetings, to “get to know them” Friends expressed thanks to God for the indications of possible openings.

PB 22-30: Moses Brown including Nominations (report and slate of nominees appended)

The PB clerk asked for specific concerns about any of the nominees, asking if PB was ready to approve.

FRIENDS APPROVED THE NAMES OFFERED IN THE REPORT

PB 22-31: Renewal of the Moses Brown Ground Lease

The PB Clerk asked for PB’s assent to carry over consideration of The Moses Brown Ground Lease until it could be considered at the June 2022 meeting of Coordinating and Advisory.

FRIENDS APPROVED C&A ADDRESSING THE MOSES BROWN LEASE.

PB 22-32: Proposal to Permanent Board regarding The Freedmen's Fund (report appended)

Bob Murray, in his role as YM Treasurer, reported on a proposal regarding the Freedman’s Fund. He noted previous concerns about endowments disbursed from the Freedman’s Fund. A small, *ad hoc* group was formed (Joyce Gibson, Leslie Manning, Beth Morrill, and Robert Murray), to develop

appropriate protocols for disbursement of the fund, and for transitions in those charged with disbursement. Their recommendations are appended.

FRIENDS APPROVED THE PROPOSAL BY THE *ad hoc* FREEDMAN'S FUND COMMITTEE

PB 22-33 Memorial Minutes (memorial minute appended)

Memorial Minute for Marjorie Hancock from Mt Toby Friends Meeting, CT Valley Quarter was submitted in advance docs

FRIENDS APPROVED THE MEMORIAL MINUTE TO BE SENT TO SESSIONS

22-34: Closing Worship

Friends closed with waiting worship

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie A. Manning
Leslie A. Manning (Oct 20, 2022 08:13 EDT)

Leslie A. Manning

Report of Planning Board Debrief with Noticings WG held on 2/7/2022

Permanent Board Friends were invited to meet with members of the Noticing Patterns of Oppression & Faithfulness Working Group on the evening of February 7, 2022. A total of 16 Friends gathered via Zoom. Our purpose was to reflect together on noticing patterns of oppression or faithfulness at the Permanent Board meeting of January 29.

Friend Polly began our reflection with a reading from a Seder Haggadah:

To ask questions is to acknowledge first & foremost that we do not live in isolation; that we need each other. To ask is to signal our desire to learn. By admitting what we do not know, we take the first steps toward greater knowledge & learning. To ask questions is to signify our freedom.

During the evening, we shared what we had noticed among Friends at the January Permanent Board meeting, what we noticed within ourselves during the January meeting, and what we were noticing as we recalled the agenda and conversations of the January meeting.

Here are some things Friends noticed.

The conversation that arose during the first half of the January meeting was experienced as a faithful effort to lovingly hold a difficult conversation as we are growing toward what God calls us to be.

We were reminded that the noticing patterns process is a way of coming to a shared understanding, as a whole meeting, of ways that we as individuals have been unknowingly participating in oppression. That is a painful realization. We remember that we are members of a loving community that supports each other tenderly in that painful place.

We were reminded that seeing and repenting of unintentional oppression is not just Permanent Board work, but the work of the whole Yearly Meeting.

We observed that, in noticing patterns, we are trying to use muscles we may have rarely, or even never, used before; we're not yet good at it, but we are trying.

We heard interest expressed in having opportunities for learning about noticing patterns, and for discussion to deepen understanding.

We expressed a sense of a Covering coming over the gathered Permanent Board meeting, followed by a more tender willingness in Friends to accept and express our own complicity and sin.

Submitted by Fran Lightsom and Janet Hough, March 11, 2022.

**Report to Permanent Board
From the Presiding Clerk
March 25, 2022**

Sessions Planning: By the time you read this, you will likely have seen a preliminary announcement that shares the news that Regina-Renee Ward will be giving the Bible Half-hours. And that the Sessions Coordination team is carrying a concern for the available energy of Sessions attenders, staff, and volunteers. All of us who have attended Sessions have at one point or another (or many times!) felt that there was too much to do, and not enough time to sit with old or new friends for the traditional Quaker practice of “opportunities.” Expect a somewhat lighter schedule.

Planning for the plenary has hit a bump in the road which leaves us without a confirmed plenary rather late in the season, AND an opportunity to do something a bit different which we hope will speak to Friends. The Theme and Speakers team had discerned that we wanted to have a time to hear from our young Friends. We believe they have some wisdom and spiritual insight which we don’t have enough opportunity to hear. But as we began to explore how we would identify and support individuals who might be led to speak, we learned that each of the age groups (JYM, JHYM, YF) is at a low ebb of spiritual community, suffering from 2 years of personal challenge (as are all of us), and an inability to gather in person, where community is nurtured. While this awareness is of great concern for the well-being of our young Friends, in the context of the plenary it means that this is not the year to give them that platform. We are exploring what a time together for all ages would look like, which both meets each of us where we are, provides sustenance and, as we hope a plenary will do, gives us a spiritual seed to nurture through the week. Expect some singing, storytelling, and small-group sharing.

Business Agenda: I am reminded to be patient – I still have no good sense of what we will be tending to during our Business sessions. I am aware that last year’s agenda was very challenging for many, and hope that this year will not be as difficult. But I also know that Friends come together wanting to do the work of discernment. A series of reports on what Quakers are up to will be informative and perhaps encouraging, but discernment is the heart of what we come to business for.

Reflection: Pat and I have had a young Afghan woman staying with us recently, and we’ve had a few discussions about the differences in our faith traditions – one significant one being the Quaker antipathy to ritual which is in our religious DNA, where the Muslim faith is rich in ritual. One Sunday she sat with us in Zoom meeting for worship, and later asked what our preparation was. My reply was that it varied a lot from person to person, but that there was a hope and intention for some prayer during the week leading up to worship. Re-learning (I think I knew this before) that Muslims do ablutions before worship, I’ve been reflecting on the value of intentionality. I have no ideas about borrowing the Muslim practice, but am reminded that it’s not enough to just show up. Whether it’s having a second cup of coffee while gazing out the window, or NOT having a second cup of coffee, or taking a short meditative walk, or putting down the newspaper and reading a few passages in the Bible, the *intention* is our preparation. Zoom has made it so easy to slide from one thing to another, where even the act of driving to meeting provided a boundary and preparation.

Bruce

To: The Permanent Board of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends
From: Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary
Re: Report in preparation for PB meeting on April 2, 2022

Dear Friends,

I'm grateful to offer this report to the Permanent Board for this first meeting following four months of sabbatical time away. Since the middle of February, I have been listening, returning, and reconnecting. It's a great joy to return to this work alongside and among you.

My profound thanks and love to all who made this season of rest, retreat, and renewal possible, and especially to Nia Thomas and Sarah Gant, the members of Coordinating & Advisory Committee, and the yearly meeting staff for their dedication, resilient patience, and loving care for the Yearly Meeting in countless ways in recent months. We are indeed deeply blessed through their continuing service.

For me, this season of sabbatical was a time of renewal, of spiritual searching and wrestling, of reflection and clarification. In this winter of listening, I found through Grace a renewed rhythm of prayer and spiritual practice. I came to know and taste in a fresh way the vital role of Sabbath in opening space for the guidance of the Spirit. And I was brought to a place of conviction in the responsibility to tend with discernment my attention and energy if I am to be of use as my service continues.

This has meant changes in my availability and priorities as I return. It means I will be less available for some requests, and this may at times present frustrations or challenges. Please know that I am seeking to be faithful in stewarding, with the help of Friends, my time and energy. My hope is that this will allow me to give more attention to what is most essential, to sustain my own capacity to abide in Love, and to allow that abiding to guide my service among Friends.

While I was away, I held you and Friends across our yearly meeting in prayer often. Returning, I've been listening and watching. As spring arrives, and as we glimpse the possibilities for new ways of connecting and reconnecting, I'm feeling three prayers, three encouragements I want to offer.

I'm feeling a prayerful concern for our **patterns of activity**, and for the risk that incessant busyness can so easily drown out the whispers of the still, small Voice. When so much of the wider discourse and dynamic of our society feeds the rising tide of despair, outrage, separation, and distraction, I believe a vital expression of the testimony of Friends now may be to do *less*, not *more*. To pay attention more deeply and lovingly to fewer concerns and priorities, rather than seeking to do more, more quickly. I have a renewed sense that God is inviting us to a greater singleness of heart, to honor the wisdom of our Quaker spiritual ancestors that calls us to be ever watchful for the stirrings of Life in the small, the everyday, the tender inward motions of Grace.

In our corporate discernment in meetings of the Permanent Board, I hope we will be open to the possibility that we—"we" in the sense of the Yearly Meeting as a whole—may be trying to do too much, and the costs this may have. The significant steps we're taking in learning to be more efficient and effective, and laying aside longstanding challenges, do not necessarily mean we

should fill that new space with more work. In the winter months, I learned about pruning fruit trees. The wisdom of experience I heard again and again is to prune as much as possible—much more than many would think wise or safe—so that the whole energy of the tree can be channeled to a few points of life. Amazingly, this radical pruning helps make possible an abundant harvest, beyond what we might have dared to hope.

I pray we will continue to grow in the practice of setting and keeping reasonable expectations and boundaries for our work, and meaningful rhythms of prayer and rest, both as individuals and corporately. I wonder how we might more fully support and encourage one another in these disciplines. I'm excited for what nourishing, beautiful, surprising fruit may arise in the space that opens.

Second, I'm holding in prayer **how we journey together as a covenant community**. Alongside our physical separations, I've sensed a weakening in our commitment to Friends' practices of gospel order in our relationships, and for how we nurture spiritual intimacy with one another as siblings in faith. I fear this may erode our witness to the wholeness of God's Love. Let us watch for pressure and temptation to fracture and form factions, to hold grudges, to nurture resentment. Let us take care with the reputations of others, avoiding gossip and assumptions, which can be so corrosive in the life of a spiritual community. Those who have come before us testify that "community" is not a goal but a spiritual discipline, a process, and a fruit of the Spirit.

Third, I'm praying for **the orientation of our vision**, the direction in which we are looking together. In our yearning and striving to be set free *from* captivity and addiction to systems, structures, and patterns of injustice and evil, may we continually seek to re-orient our hearts and our corporate attention toward the Pattern that sets us free, and the vocation that we are being set free *for*: to participate in and share the workings of a humble, self-giving, liberating Love; to abide in and invite others to encounter for themselves the peace and healing that the world cannot give.

This, so many before us have testified with their lives, is the essential rhythm of how the Reign of Heaven breaks in and is revealed among us. In the deepest sense, this is not a *goal*, but a *relationship*. As we allow this Pattern to take root in our hearts and reshape our desires and actions, may we discover this inbreaking more and more.

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Below are some updates on my priorities and work as I return, and one additional item (final page) for requested action at our upcoming meeting.

Children & Family Ministries Coordinator Search

With deep gratitude to the members of the search committee (Anna Lindo, Karen Sanchez-Eppler, Quinn Nortonsmith, and Kristin Wilson), and for the vital work of consultation and preparation over the fall and winter by the Youth Ministries Committee, youth staff, and Nia Thomas and Sarah Gant, I can report that the search process for the role of Children & Family Ministries Coordinator is nearing completion, with final interviews and discernment scheduled to occur in the next two weeks. It has been a dynamic and prayerful process, and I look forward to being able to share more news soon.

The transition plan is for the final candidate, once they have accepted the role, to participate in a gradual onboarding process during the spring and early summer, with the goal of the new Coordinator attending Sessions in person, shadowing Gretchen Baker-Smith in her work this August.

Ministry & Spiritual Life

As part of the experiment exploring both ancient and new forms through which the Yearly Meeting might nurture spiritual life and ministry among New England Friends, the Ministry Transition Team, consisting of Jeremiah Dickinson, Sarah Gant, Nia Thomas, Leslie Manning, and myself has been gathering reflections and input from extensive listening and prayerful reflection, and is working (as charged by Permanent Board) toward a progress report and simple recommendations to bring to Permanent Board and Sessions this summer. We hope to be able to offer a report and set of recommendations to the Permanent Board meeting in June, in the hope that, with Friends guidance and endorsement, this report and recommendations can be brought to Sessions in August.

Preparations for the April 9 gathering on spiritual life and ministry, to be held as a hybrid event with a large group in-person event at the Friends School of Portland, are nearing completion. More information on this gathering is available [here](#).

Sessions 2022 Planning

With the approval of the theme and welcoming the new clerk of Sessions planning, Phil Veatch, a new season of Sessions planning has begun. I hope Friends saw the [save the date announcement](#) from the presiding clerk and clerk of Sessions Planning last week. The next major steps in the planning process are the approval of the schedule and the recruitment of Friends to serve in key coordination roles during our time together. The discernment of the Permanent Board at this meeting on the proposal regarding waiving Sessions fees for children and youth will play a significant role in both outreach and finances for Sessions 2022.

Two questions I'm holding as I've returned to Sessions planning, as we move into this full season of preparation—returning to in-person Sessions while trying to include remote access as we're able, with all the exhaustion and strain of the past two years—are:

“How simple could it be?” and “how much is enough?”

I'm grateful for the increasing intentionality and integration of Sessions planning, as Friends endeavor more and more to hold and serve the whole, to remove barriers to participation, and to consider the implications of our decisions for wider communities of Friends across New England.

Development

A fundraising appeal letter supporting the annual fund is on the way to the printer, planned to arrive in mid-April. We are also planning a letter to monthly meetings with an emphasis on educating Friends about the uses and continuing need for Equalization support from local meetings as a key part of the Pay-As-Led approach to Sessions fees. This will be an especially important reminder and invitation as we return to in-person Sessions this year.

With the goal of strengthening the consistency of and attention to our development and fundraising efforts, we've formed a new team within the staff consisting of the Accounts Manager, Office Manager, Quaker Practice & Leadership Facilitator, and myself to focus and carry forward our development efforts. Coupled with consideration by Coordinating & Advisory Committee for a small group of experienced Friends to advise these efforts, I believe this is an important step responding to our approved FY2022-2023 funding priority, to strengthen administrative and development capacity. The primary intention of this funding priority is to allow the Secretary to focus more energy on support for local meetings and nurturing Friends called to ministry, something I am eager to embrace as it becomes more possible.

With input from the Finance Committee and members of Coordinating & Advisory Committee, since my return I have been developing a proposal regarding the creation of a small number of endowment funds, the annual income from which would support enduring aspects of the vision and mission of the Yearly Meeting. After further seasoning and development, I hope to have more to share with Permanent Board for seasoning and discernment in June.

Personnel and financial policies review

While much good work has been done in recent years to update and align our personnel and financial policies, it's clear to me that some further work is necessary to respond to current conditions. This includes ensuring that our policies include relevant aspects of the needs of Friends Camp where necessary; that our benefits for staff are updated, appropriate, and equitable; and that financial policies both provide clear controls and direction, and allow for sufficient flexibility for our current context. In partnership and consultation, I will be supporting efforts to consult, review and revise these sets of policies in the coming months, with final recommendations on policy changes to be brought to Permanent Board for approval, as is our practice. In connection with this, I hope to be able to share updates on some shifts in staff responsibilities that are under consideration as we move out of this phase of the pandemic.

Podcast

I'm excited to share that our NEYM podcast channel, "[Then I Heard a Voice](#)", has recently reached and surpassed 2000 downloads. Have you explored the variety of audio content available for and from Quakers in New England? You can find and play the content online [here](#), or subscribe to our podcast and automatically get access to new content, wherever you get your podcasts. Watch for more new audio content—and news of related experiments—in the coming months.

New support with aging concerns for local meetings

With gratitude for the work of Nia Thomas in recent months, and previously of Honor Woodrow, former clerk of Ministry & Counsel, I hope to soon have news to share regarding a promising new partnership between New England Yearly Meeting, the Friends Foundation for the Aging, and [ARCH](#) (Aging Resources Consultation and Help), a program of New York Yearly Meeting. ARCH supports a respected network of traveling "ARCH visitors" who visit Friends Meetings to support the meeting and its members in responding to issues relating to aging grounded in the faith and practice of Friends. As part of an experimental project, New York Yearly Meeting has offered to include in their network a Friend serving as such a visitor based in New England, and serving our local meetings.

We are hopeful based on recent conversations that grant funding may be available to support such an exploration. We hope to be able to provide a fuller update and report on progress in June.

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My profound thanks and love to all who made this season of rest, retreat, and renewal possible, and especially to Nia Thomas and Sarah Gant, the members of Coordinating & Advisory Committee, and the yearly meeting staff for their dedication, resilient patience, and loving care for the Yearly Meeting in countless ways in recent months. We are indeed deeply blessed through their continuing service.

For me, this season of sabbatical was a time of renewal, of spiritual searching and wrestling, of reflection and clarification. In this winter of listening, I found through Grace a renewed rhythm of prayer and spiritual practice. I came to know and taste in a fresh way the vital role of Sabbath in opening space for the guidance of the Spirit. And I was brought to a place of conviction in the responsibility to tend with discernment my attention and energy if I am to be of use as my service continues.

This has meant changes in my availability and priorities as I return. It means I will be less available for some requests, and this may at times present frustrations or challenges. Please know that I am seeking to be faithful in stewarding, with the help of Friends, my time and energy. My hope is that this will allow me to give more attention to what is most essential, to sustain my own capacity to abide in Love, and to allow that abiding to guide my service among Friends.

While I was away, I held you and Friends across our yearly meeting in prayer often. Returning, I've been listening and watching. As spring arrives, and as we glimpse the possibilities for new ways of connecting and reconnecting, I'm feeling three prayers, three encouragements I want to offer.

I'm feeling a prayerful concern for our **patterns of activity**, and for the risk that incessant busyness can so easily drown out the whispers of the still, small Voice. When so much of the wider discourse and dynamic of our society feeds the rising tide of despair, outrage, separation, and distraction, I believe a vital expression of the testimony of Friends now may be to do *less*, not *more*. To pay attention more deeply and lovingly to fewer concerns and priorities, rather than seeking to do more, more quickly. I have a renewed sense that God is inviting us to a greater singleness of heart, to honor the wisdom of our Quaker spiritual ancestors that calls us to be ever watchful for the stirrings of Life in the small, the everyday, the tender inward motions of Grace.

In our corporate discernment in meetings of the Permanent Board, I hope we will be open to the possibility that we—"we" in the sense of the Yearly Meeting as a whole—may be trying to do too much, and the costs this may have. The significant steps we're taking in learning to be more efficient and effective, and laying aside longstanding challenges, do not necessarily mean we

NEYM
Q1 FY2022 Operating Budget vs Actuals
 October - December, 2021

	Q1 FY2022 Actual	Q1 FY2021 (previous YTD)	FY2022 Full Year Budget	Q1 FY2022 % of Full-Year Budget
Income				
4010 Individual Contributions	40,285	35,818	230,225	17.50%
4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions	66,549	86,256	373,000	17.84%
4050 Interest and Dividend Income	2,946	5	9,000	32.74%
4070 Books & Other Sales Income	542		17,000	3.19%
4080 Retreat Program Fees	4,250	1,096	47,000	9.04%
4085 Sessions Program Fees			221,300	0.00%
4090 Change in Fair Market Value	105			
4099 Net Assets Released To/From	32,967		15,000	219.78%
Total Income	147,644	123,175	912,525	16.18%
Gross Profit	147,644	123,175	912,525	16.18%
Expenses				
5000 Staff	126,650	96,487	452,112	28.01%
5100 General & Administration	26,737	32,465	105,715	25.29%
5300 Travel & Conferences	701	60	35,300	1.98%
6000 Programs	10,550	3,496	285,680	3.69%
6140 Books & Other Sales Expense			14,500	0.00%
6200 Support of Other Organizations			45,975	0.00%
Total Expenses	164,638	132,508	939,282	17.53%
Net Operating Income	(16,994)	(9,333)	(26,757)	63.51%

Notes:

Bank accounts, credit card accounts, and Pooled Funds statement reconciled through December 31.
 Pooled Funds income and change in fair market value for Q1 distributed to NEYM funds.
 Closing journal entries done for Q1, moving net income for Q1 for each fund to equity account for that fund.
 Fund balances shown in balance sheet are accurate as of December 31.

NEYM
Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2021

	Total		Total
ASSETS		Equity	
Current Assets		3500 Working Capital	(39,630)
Bank Accounts		3600 Board Designated Funds	1,497,519
1000 Checking Accounts	201,650	3700 Revolving Accounts	138,688
1020 Money Market Accounts	189,202	3800 Permanently Restricted Funds	721,910
1050 Certificates of Deposits		3900 Retained Earnings	
Total Bank Accounts	390,852	Net Income	95,296
Accounts Receivable		Total Equity	2,413,784
1200 Accounts Receivable		TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	2,419,172
Total Accounts Receivable			
Other Current Assets			
1075 Pooled Funds	2,092,661		
1100 Accrued Receivables	(124)		
1110 Due to/from Friends Camp	(64,600)		
1150 Prepaid Expenses	382		
1190 Misc due to/from			
1499 Undeposited Funds			
Total Other Current Assets	2,028,320		
Total Current Assets	2,419,172		
TOTAL ASSETS	2,419,172		
 LIABILITIES AND EQUITY			
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Credit Cards			
2005 Credit Card Elan St Marys	3,211		
Total Credit Cards	3,211		
Other Current Liabilities			
2010 Accrued Liabilities	77		
2110 Federal Taxes			
2120 State Taxes			
2150 Health Insurance Premium	487		
2155 Sect 125 Employee Withholding	1,577		
2160 403B Retirement	37		
2170 BSB SBA PPP loan			
2171 BSB SBA PPP loan 2nd Draw			
Total Other Current Liabilities	2,177		
Total Current Liabilities	5,388		
Total Liabilities	5,388		

Estimate of Available Unrestricted Reserves Showing Committed and Planned Uses of Reserves

By Frederick Martin, updated 3/22/2022 -- after closing Q1 FY2022

Quasi-Endowment <i>as of 12/31/2021</i>	283,607
Working Cap <i>as of 12/31/2021</i>	(39,630)
Working Cap includes transfers for volunteer leadership stipends & Acting Secretaries	
Total reserves 12/31/2021	243,977
Operating expense budget FY2022 (current year)	939,282
1/4 of operating expense budget	234,821
Excess reserves EOY FY21 = reserves >1/4 of FY22 expense budget	9,156
	25.97%
Additions to reserves FY22 so far	
FMHG return of premium (less Camp portion)	31,972
PPP 2nd Draw forgiven Office portion	74,140
Total expected additions	106,112
Uses of reserves: committed for FY2022	
Sabbatical-related staff expense (PB June 2021) already booked in Working Capital above	
FY2022 operating budget use of reserves for officer stipends (Sessions 2021) already booked	
Additional Online Infrastructure (revised consultant quotes)	(25,000)
Assume budgeted FY2022 deficit (Sessions 2021)	(26,757)
Sum of committed reserves:	(51,757)
Excess reserves projected end of FY22 given commitments & additions so far	63,511
Use of reserves: new, not committed but probably needed:	
Anti-racism Consultation (concept appr PB July 2021, \$ amnt proposed Nov 2021 PB AdDocs)	(15,000)
Sum of new uses suggested but not committed:	(15,000)
Estimated excess reserves EOY FY22 assuming + expected additions + commitments	
+ new uses	48,511

New England Yearly Meeting
FY2023 Operating (Non-Camp) Budget Proposed
 version #3-B 3/18/2022 approved by Finance Committee 3-26-22

Category	FY2021		FY2022	Δ FY22 to FY23 Budgets	FY2023 Proposed Budget
	Actuals	Budget	Budget		
	<i>(italics = affected by pandemic)</i>				
Income					
4010 Individual Contributions					
4010 Individual Contributions Total	177,609.60	230,225	230,225	-	230,225
4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions				-	
4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions Total	328,749.03	373,000	373,000	-	373,000
4025 Unallocated Income	900.00			31,000	31,000
4030 Organizations Contributions	301.00	0	0	-	0
4050 Interest and Dividend Income	10,164.32	9,000	9,000	3,000	12,000
4070 Books & Other Sales Income		17,000	17,000	-	17,000
4080 Retreat Program Fees	7,346.61	47,000	47,000	-	47,000
4085 Sessions Program Fees	42,437.00	211,050	221,300	6,100	227,400
4090 Change in Fair Market Value	-365.72	0	0	-	0
4099 Net Assets Released To/From	2,090.00	0	15,000	15,000	30,000
Total Income	569,231.84	887,275	912,525	55,100	967,625
Expenses					
5000 Staff					
Total 5000 Staff	410,548	431,519	452,112	41,572	493,684
Total 5100 General & Administration	91,615	104,565	105,715	(12,100)	93,615
Total 5300 Travel & Conferences	2,770	35,300	35,300	-	35,300
Total 6000 Programs	18,576	270,010	285,680	(1,380)	284,300
Total 6140 Books & Other Sales Expense		14,500	14,500	-	14,500
Total 6200-6590 Support of Other Organizations	44,014	45,975	45,975	-	45,975
Total 6600 Publications	0	4,000	0	-	0
Total Expenses	567,523	905,869	939,282	28,092	967,374
Net Operating Income	1,709	-18,594	-26,757	27,008	251
Other Income					
9940 Other Income - Transfers from other funds	79,291.11				
Total Other Income	79,291.11				
Other Expenses					
9950 Other Expense - Transfer to other funds	77,202.00				
Total Other Expenses	77,202.00				
Net Other Income	2,089.11				
Net Income	3,798.09				

New England Yearly Meeting
FY2023 Operating (Non-Camp) Budget Proposed
 version #3-B 3/18/2022 approved by Finance Committee 3-26-22

Category	FY2021		FY2022	Δ FY22 to FY23 Budgets	FY2023 Proposed Budget	Notes
	Actuals	Budget	Budget			
Income	<i>(italics = affected by pandemic)</i>					
4010 Individual Contributions						
General Fund Contributions	155,669.60	204,225	204,225	-	204,225	
Equalization Contributions	21,940.00	26,000	26,000	-	26,000	
4010 Individual Contributions Total	177,609.60	230,225	230,225	-	230,225	
4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions						
General Fund Contributions	319,842.03	350,000	350,000	-	350,000	
Equalization Contributions	8,907.00	23,000	23,000	-	23,000	
4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions Total	328,749.03	373,000	373,000	-	373,000	
4025 Unallocated Income	900.00			31,000	31,000	1
4030 Organizations Contributions	301.00	0	0	-	0	
4050 Interest and Dividend Income	10,164.32	9,000	9,000	3,000	12,000	
4070 Books & Other Sales Income		17,000	17,000	-	17,000	
4080 Retreat Program Fees	7,346.61	47,000	47,000	-	47,000	
4085 Sessions Program Fees	42,437.00	211,050	221,300	6,100	227,400	
4090 Change in Fair Market Value	-365.72	0	0	-	0	
4099 Net Assets Released To/From	2,090.00	0	15,000	15,000	30,000	2, 3
Total Income	569,231.84	887,275	912,525	55,100	967,625	
Expenses						
5000 Staff						
Total 5000 Staff	410,548	431,519	452,112	41,572	493,684	4
5100 General & Administration						
5110 Administration						
5120 Bank Expense	4,488	7,000	7,000	-	7,000	
5130 Contracted Services	18,258	30,900	31,900	(9,900)	22,000	
5135 Accounting Services	2,500	2,500	2,500	(2,500)	0	
5140 Legal Services	2,500	2,500	2,500	-	2,500	
5145 Infrastructure	5,000	5,000	5,000	-	5,000	
5150 Liability Insurance	4,673	5,100	5,250	-	5,250	
5160 Payroll Service	5,582	5,200	5,200	300	5,500	
5170 Recruiting Expense		0	0	-	0	
5180 Rent	9,350	9,350	9,350	-	9,350	
5190 Misc. Expense	159	0	0	-	0	
Total 5110 Administration	52,509	67,550	68,700	(12,100)	56,600	
5200 Office						
5220 Archives Office Expenses		0	0	-	0	
5220 Cleaning Services	88	265	265	-	265	
5230 Maint - Equip & Hardware	343	1,250	1,250	-	1,250	
5240 Postage	4,693	3,750	3,750	-	3,750	
5250 Office Equipment	3,558	3,250	3,250	-	3,250	
5260 Office Supplies	1,094	2,500	2,500	-	2,500	
5270 Printing & Copying	8,632	14,500	14,500	-	14,500	
5280 Software & Updates	17,177	7,000	7,000	-	7,000	
5290 Telephone	3,492	4,500	4,500	-	4,500	
5295 Misc. Office	29	0	0	-	0	
Total 5200 Office	39,105	37,015	37,015	-	37,015	
Total 5100 General & Administration	91,615	104,565	105,715	(12,100)	93,615	
5300 Travel & Conferences						
5310 Travel - Committee	775	3,000	3,000	-	3,000	
5320 Travel - Clerk		4,500	4,500	-	4,500	

5330 Travel - Programs	60	3,700	3,700	-	3,700	
5335 Travel - Representatives Travel	150	6,700	6,700	-	6,700	
5350 Travel - Staff	1,785	17,000	17,000	-	17,000	
5360 Travel - Ministries		400	400	-	400	
Total 5300 Travel & Conferences	2,770	35,300	35,300	-	35,300	
6000 Programs						
6110 Sessions Room & Board		181,140	186,850	6,100	192,950	
6112 Retreats - Room & Board				-		
6114 Room Rental	575	20,000	17,530	(3,980)	13,550	
6150 Food Expense	434	18,000	17,430	(1,500)	15,930	
Total 6112 Retreats - Room & Board	1,009	38,000	34,960	(5,480)	29,480	
6125 Program Expenses						
6105 Honoraria - Speakers/Wkshp Ldrs	13,550	22,000	22,000	-	22,000	
6107 Honoraria - Volunteer Leadership			15,000	-	15,000	
6115 Equipment Rental		6,000	6,000	-	6,000	
6121 Supplies and Other Expenses	957	9,300	9,300	(2,000)	7,300	
6165 Pre-Sessions Expense		1,000	1,000	-	1,000	
Total 6125 Program Expenses	14,507	38,300	53,300	(2,000)	51,300	
6130 Committee Expenses - General	1,500	6,350	6,350	-	6,350	
6134 Childcare		2,000	2,000	-	2,000	
6137 Committee Day Expenses		0	0	-	0	
Total 6130 Committee Expenses - General	1,500	8,350	8,350	-	8,350	
6160 Program Support						
6163 Friends Camp	1,561	2,220	2,220	-	2,220	
6167 Religious Education & Outreach		2,000	0	-	0	
Total 6160 Program Support	1,561	4,220	2,220	-	2,220	
Total 6000 Programs	18,576	270,010	285,680	(1,380)	284,300	
6140 Books & Other Sales Expense						
6142 Books		14,500	14,500	-	14,500	
6147 Consignment Sales		0	0	-	0	
Total 6140 Books & Other Sales Expense		14,500	14,500	-	14,500	
6200 Support of Other Organizations						
Total 6200-6590 Support of Other Organizations	44,014	45,975	45,975	-	45,975	5
6600 Publications						
6610 Yearly Meeting Minute Book		0	0	-	0	
6620 New England Friend (Sessions Issue)		4,000	0	-	0	6
Total 6600 Publications	0	4,000	0	-	0	
Total Expenses	567,523	905,869	939,282	28,092	967,374	
Net Operating Income	1,709	-18,594	-26,757	27,008	251	
Other Income						
9940 Other Income - Transfers from other funds	79,291.11					
Total Other Income	79,291.11					
Other Expenses						
9950 Other Expense - Transfer to other funds	77,202.00					
Total Other Expenses	77,202.00					
Net Other Income	2,089.11					
Net Income	3,798.09					

Notes:

- 1 Friends Mutual Health Group distribution of surplus, second part of two; first received November 2021.
- 2 Funding the priority for support of monthly meetings and ministries, \$20,000 from unrestricted reserves; see note 4
- 3 Funding the Honoraria Supporting Volunteer Leadership is being phased in over three years; for FY2022 the full \$15,000 is coming from reserves, in FY2023 \$10,000 and in FY2024 \$5000 will come from reserves. The expense is being tracked in the new subcategory "Honoraria - Volunteer Leadership"
- 4 COLA increase of 6.3% + small merit increase. \$20,000 to address the priority for support of monthly meetings and ministers by increased support staff (PB 21-89); this increase can be used in either 5130 Contracted Services or 5000 Staff Salaries & Benefits.
- 5 If proposal of Financial Contributions Working Group is adopted by PB, budget will be presented to Sessions simply with this line. Amounts will remain flat between FY22-FY23
- 6 Publication of New England Friend Sessions Issue now tracked in 5270 Office: Printing & Copying.

Financial Contributions Working Group Final Report

February 27, 2022

At the request of the Permanent Board clerk, we present the final report from our work over the past several months. An earlier draft of this report was discussed at the February Finance Committee meeting, and we have received their blessing to proceed as we outlined there.

Some background: the Financial Contributions Working Group was formed by Permanent Board to “study the contributions we make as part of the annual operating budget.” Specifically, we were asked “to plan and host a consultation of invited Friends to consider [questions about NEYM’s support of FGC, FUM and FWCC as well as donations to outside organizations]. To write a report responding to the Finance Committee questions. To bring the report to Finance Committee on 19 February 2021 for input and then to Permanent Board on 2 April for approval.”

Our group, convened by Lucy Meadows and also consisting of Ben Guaraldi and Elias Hanno, met five times in January and February 2022. We did not fulfill the letter of our charge, but we believe we fulfilled the spirit.

We were clear that there was not enough time for adequate discernment before April 2022 to make major changes in NEYM’s contributions to other organizations for FY23.

Therefore we recommend that Finance Committee present a budget for FY23 that keeps the total contributions the same as in the FY22 budget, while not specifying the recipients of those contributions. We have presented this recommendation to Finance Committee and they have agreed to develop a budget in this fashion for FY23.

We also recommend that Permanent Board discern how to divide the total among the various groups in FY23, to be decided by August 2023 at the latest. Permanent Board may even see fit to ask another group to undertake the consultation proposed in our original charge—we did not feel the consultation would be productive in discerning contribution levels, but Permanent Board may feel differently. Permanent Board may also see fit to delegate the final decision on contributions to Sessions 2023. Regardless of the final decision, we recommend that Permanent Board present this new approach (with any modifications) at Sessions before Finance Committee presents the budget.

After FY23, we recommend delegating the discernment about the total amount of contributions to Permanent Board, to be seasoned through the priorities process. We believe the priorities process is “a consultative process which creates space for many perspectives to be considered including from Friends of different generations, Friends who hold concern for NEYM’s financial health, and Friends who hold a concern for NEYM’s relationship to other Quaker organizations,” and therefore fulfills that part of our charge for fiscal years beyond FY23.

After FY23, we also recommend that while the discernment of how much to give in total to outside organizations would be done during the budget process, the discernment of which organizations specifically would receive the money would be done after the budget has been approved but before funds are actually dispersed.

Here are our recommendations in detail:

1. Does NEYM make contributions to outside organizations at all?

- **FY23:** We continue making contributions for FY23.
- **Future years:** The annual priorities process is modified to include a recommendation about total budget for contributions to outside organizations. Permanent Board then approves the total budget for contributions along with the other funding priorities by the December 10 months before the fiscal year begins.
 - The current priorities process is that C&A has a retreat in September, where they discern, and then they bring a report to Permanent Board in November.
 - We recognize that in many years, this part of the discernment may be fairly negligible, but we hope that next year and then every three years or so, the total donation amount will be more deeply considered.

2. How much do we give in total?

- **FY23:** The total amount for contributions stays the same in the FY23 budget as it was in the FY22 budget, but the names of recipients are excluded from the budget.
- **Future years:** Finance Committee discerns total budget amount for contributions to all outside organizations, possibly reducing contributions to \$0, with input from the priorities process (see above).

3. How do we divide it?

- **FY23:** Permanent Board decides how much to donate to each organization in FY23 by August 2023 at the latest so contributions can be made before the fiscal year ends.
 - Permanent Board may attempt to discern these amounts in a regular Permanent Board meeting, though some members of our committee have trouble imagining how that would work.
 - Permanent Board may also delegate discernment to other committees or working groups, such as the Legacy Gift Committee.
 - Permanent Board may wish to delegate the final decision to Sessions 2023.
 - (Note that some concern has been expressed that changing the *amounts* given to external organizations at the same time as changing the *process* by which these decisions are made is moving too quickly. This concern has not caused us to change our recommendation that Permanent Board discern which organizations should receive funds from NEYM in FY23, but we report the concern in case Permanent Board shares it.)
- **Future years:** Permanent Board or Sessions decides the division of funds by the August before the fiscal year ends at the latest, again perhaps delegating some or all of this decision. Again, we recognize that in many years, this discernment may be fairly negligible, but when there are changes to the total amount NEYM is giving, changes to the organizations we wish to give to, or changes in NEYM itself, we foresee that the recipients will be more deeply considered. We imagine that eventually this allocation process may even catch up with the process of deciding how much to give in total (see above) and could be presented at the same Sessions as the total amount, but we recommend that even if that happens the approval processes should remain separate and the specific allocations should not be part of the budgets Finance Committee presents.

We also spent some time considering queries to guide discernment. They are as follows:

Queries to guide whether to give and how much in total:

- How are we guided by the Spirit?
- Does NEYM's practice of donating further the mission of NEYM?
- Does NEYM's practice of donating have life or is it a formality?
- Would NEYM's refraining from donating be hypocritical, given that NEYM survives on donations from our local meetings?

Queries to guide how much to give to a specific organization:

- How are we guided by the Spirit?
- Does this organization further the mission of NEYM?
- To what extent is this organization a part of the life of NEYM? How broad and how deep is the connection?
- How will NEYM's donation affect the organization? Will it help or hurt the organization, or will it have no effect?
- How will NEYM's donation affect NEYM? Will it help or hurt NEYM, or will it have no effect?

For reference, here are NEYM's budgeted contributions from FY22:

FGC	\$13,075
FUM*	\$13,075
FWCC	\$13,075
State Councils of Churches	\$4,000
FCNL	\$750
FWCC Third World Travel	\$500
AFSC	\$300
QEW	\$300
QUNO	\$200
National Council of Churches	\$150
New England Ecumenical Network	\$150
Friends Peace Teams	\$100
Quaker Voluntary Service	\$100
Ramallah Friends School	\$100
World Council of Churches	\$100
Total:	\$45,975

* Note that due to the withholding policy originally begun in 2009, NEYM gives only approximately 84% of our budgeted contribution to FUM each year. The recommendations we make would not change this policy, but could change the total budgeted amount of the contribution to FUM.

With this report, we believe we have completed the work set out for us to the best of our abilities and that it falls to others to carry this work forward. We have appreciated the opportunity to serve the Yearly Meeting, and we request that the Financial Contributions Working Group be laid down.

Year of (re)engagement:

A proposal to support children, youth, and family participation at Sessions

Submitted: March 15, 2022

Submitted by: Nia Thomas, Quaker Practice & Leadership Facilitator, nia@neym.org

With endorsement from: Coordinating & Advisory, Sessions planners, and NEYM staff

Proposal for approval:

For NEYM's Annual Sessions 2022, the suggested fee for all children and youth will be zero dollars. "Children and youth" would be defined as anyone under the age of 18 or anyone 18+ who is still part of the Young Friends (high school) program.

If total Sessions income (fees plus equalization funds) do not cover Sessions expenses (including staff time) for 2022, allow for a transfer of up to \$20,000 from the unrestricted reserves to cover losses in income from children and youth. Our excess unrestricted reserves are currently sufficient to cover such a transfer.

Why would NEYM do this?

For many, the last two years of the pandemic have placed particular strain on children, youth, and families' participation in Quaker activities. Many of our families and youth are less engaged than they were in 2019, and much of the momentum and critical mass that has sustained participation in our youth programs at Sessions has decreased. It is time to prioritize (re)engagement. As we look toward finally being able to gather at Castleton again, it is critical that we offer Sessions in a way that is as compelling and accessible to families and youth as possible.

For many families, this year will be a time of setting new routines and choosing how (or if) to re-engage with Friends. Nothing says "please just come, we want you here" more than offering for children and youth to attend for free (meaning, with a suggested fee of \$0). Lifting this financial burden for families is especially important at this time when many families with younger children have experienced decreased income in response to the widespread Covid-exacerbated childcare shortage in our region. For a large number of our families with school-age children, a significant source of ministry, Quaker connection and joy has been participation at Friends Camp. For many of these families, paying for both Camp and Sessions is a heavy burden (especially during this time of historic inflation). By making this bold investment in the multigenerational community we yearn to nurture, we would demonstrate not only to families, but also to local meetings, and donors that we are willing to put serious resources forward in support of our vision.

Eliminating fees is not the only way we will welcome youth and families into Sessions, but it is an important component of that welcome. NEYM Sessions planners and youth program staff are working hard to plan a Sessions that is a multigenerational experience which works for youth and families in their diverse needs. One example of this is that the Theme and Speakers team found

themselves clear to ask young Friends to be involved in giving the plenary this year. This grew out of a sense that our younger Quakers have some real wisdom that we need to hear at this time.

Another unique opportunity this summer brings is that this is a historic transition time for our youth ministries staff. Gretchen Baker-Smith will be retiring from her staff position, and this Sessions is a time to celebrate her decades of service and, God willing, to welcome in our new Children and Families Ministries Coordinator. There may be no better way to “pass the baton” and pave the way for a smooth transition than for as many Quaker youth and families as possible to physically witness the transition and personally meet our new Coordinator.

How would we fund this?

We already use a funding model which relies on non-fees income to support the participation of our children and youth. Sessions is funded through two primary income streams: participant fees and donations to the equalization fund. In the last five years when we’ve had in-person Sessions, participant fees have accounted for 82% of Sessions income and equalization has accounted for 18%. Of this, income from children and youth fees accounts for just 13% percent of our overall Sessions income, while children and youth have used about 25% of the total amount subsidized from Equalization.

What’s more, a significant portion of our costs related to children and youth are fixed, meaning we will need to spend money regardless of whether a healthy number of families register. A significant portion of the Sessions budget is the volunteer fee waivers & stipends needed to support the Friends who run our youth programs. Because of our child safety protocols, our commitment to high quality programming, and the long days during Sessions, the minimum number of volunteers needed to staff these programs is quite high. While it is true that an increase in youth participation could require an increase in youth programs staff, it is also true that offering our youth programs for even a very small number of youth will require dozens of volunteers. By increasing the likelihood that more families will participate in Sessions this summer, we also increase the value we get from our “base” youth programs Sessions staff.

Sessions is offered on a pay-as-led basis, with suggested fees and information about our costs provided, helping guide payment decisions for many participants. If this proposal is approved, the suggested fee for children and youth will be \$0. Information will be offered to registrants clarifying that the suggested fee is \$0 because NEYM was led to offer an especially warm welcome to families this year, in light of the particular strain on them due to the pandemic. Messaging around pay-as-led and Sessions equalization will also clearly explain that our costs related to children and youth at Sessions have not been eliminated and that we encourage Friends who are led and able to contribute financially towards making Sessions possible for all. In addition to our annual letter about equalization which goes to local meetings, this year we will also send a letter to Friends choosing to participate remotely, explaining that although the direct cost of remote participation is fairly low, we very much encourage Friends to consider if they are led and able to contribute towards everyone’s participation in Sessions. These fundraising efforts would be important in setting a tone for both this year and future years, but our unrestricted excess reserves are sufficient to cover a fairly substantial shortfall in Sessions fees if needed.

If total Sessions income (fees plus equalization funds) do not cover Sessions expenses (including staff time) for 2022, this proposal would allow for a transfer of up to \$20,000 from the unrestricted reserves to cover losses in income from children and youth. Our excess unrestricted reserves are currently sufficient to cover such a transfer, with approximately \$37K in excess reserves after accounting for previous commitments (“excess” meaning the amount on top the amount our policy requires us to keep in reserves for financial security).

Taking this bold step this year will build a foundation for future Sessions. Not only will this be an opportunity to re-engage Friends who have become less active in our events during the pandemic, it will also greatly increase the likelihood of healthy participation by children and families in future years. A child who participates in JYM or JHYM program at Sessions has a 93% chance of attending Sessions again within the next 3 years and an 83% chance of participating in youth retreats during the year. (Author’s note: As someone who was first brought to NEYM Sessions at age 12 by a Friend in my meeting and has attended every year since, this does not surprise me!).

In summary, welcoming families with a zero dollar fee for children and youth will help ensure the best possible participation in Sessions by Quaker families in New England. This re-engagement will set the yearly meeting up for long term health as a community. This particular invitation recognizes the particular hardships that families with young children and teens have faced and encourages them to reconnect with the broader community. By being clear with Friends across New England about our goal for taking this approach, we have faith that those with the means to do so will support this invitation financially allowing them a clear way to invest in the New England Quaker community. I hope the careful study and discernment that went into this proposal is sufficient to earn your support.

Letter from the NEYM Representatives to the American Friends Service Committee Corporation to Permanent Board and Friends from Dover and Connecticut Valley Quarters

25 March 2022

Dear Friends:

We write you as New England Yearly Meeting representatives to the American Friends Service Committee Corporation, and in response to minutes approved by Dover and Connecticut Valley Quarters, as well as a request for a report from Permanent Board. While there are only two formal minutes from Friends within the Yearly Meeting, we are aware that many monthly meetings and individual Friends have been concerned by reverberations from within the AFSC in recent months. It is our sense that most of the concerns raised relate to a process of restructuring underway in the organization, in the wake of approval in 2020 of a new Strategic Plan (which can be accessed [here](https://www.afsc.org/strategicplan)). [<https://www.afsc.org/strategicplan>].

We know of at least two communications that have generated these concerns. First, an open letter was published in the *Western Friend* newsletter, signed by one current staff member, several former staff and several members of the Corporation and other committees. Second, a document titled “AFSC at the Crossroads: A Call to Seek a New Unity” was circulated widely within NEYM, co-authored by Paul Kerr, clerk of AFSC’s Northeast Regional Executive Committee and member of Exeter Meeting (Philadelphia YM), and Beth Collea, a member of Dover Monthly Meeting.

These two documents paint a picture of developments within the AFSC, both in terms of the processes of consultation and decision making, and in terms of the projected outcomes of restructuring the organization. We hope that readers of these documents will seek a fuller picture provided by other perspectives and facts. The signers are respected Friends and colleagues who enjoy considerable credibility. However, there are other views that should be heard and respected. We would like to assure Friends that, while there is a vigorous and passionate exchange going on, the situation is more positive than these documents present. Additional information is available. An “FAQ” document was prepared by AFSC staff leadership following the *Western Friend* letter—and is attached here.

In the spring of 2021, after considerable consultations, staff leadership and a Board Working Group presented initial proposals for new structures—and received significant pushback, especially among staff and committees in the United States. As a result, the process was slowed down and a “co-creation” process initiated on the staff side, while the Board Working Group continued consultations with a range of groups.

At this moment, AFSC staff, union representatives and governance volunteers are engaged in vigorous discussion and negotiation of essential structural issues. Three staff working groups and a governance working group are working hard to shape a new set of proposals for organizational structures that will better support achievement of the challenging goals of the Strategic Plan. One staff group is working on revised structures among US-based programs; a second staff group is working on mechanisms to support cohesion/collaboration across programs in the US and internationally; a Board Working Group is designing aligned governance structures; and a fourth group will bring the results of those separate discussions together and strive to harmonize them. These developments are described more fully in the attached FAQ document.

The issues at play in the current tensions center on a series of issues that have become contentious during recent decades in the organization. If you want to kill any proposal for change, you merely have to

attach one of these epithets to the idea: corporate, centralization, top-down, neocolonial, racist, or disconnected from the communities we wish to serve. These concepts each represent important shared values—and also various dimensions of power, its use and possible abuse. For instance, a proposal to increase the amount of collaboration among similar programs in different locations—and therefore possibly increase their cumulative impact on systems of oppression—might be labelled as “centralization” or “top-down” (turning away from the voices and concerns of local communities). Legitimate concerns for program effectiveness and impact are thereby pitted against shared values for grounding programs in communities. This is but one example among many under discussion. The challenge is to reach deeper and beyond the epithets to a more complete understanding of the values, interests, and perceived threats by all of those involved, in an effort to achieve unity of purpose that will allow the important work to proceed.

Friends often have difficulty acknowledging or dealing frankly with issues of power and authority. In fact, for some, any power differential appears to be a contradiction of Quaker beliefs in equality, that of God in each of us, and access by any/all to the Light. The AFSC may find deeper wisdom regarding organizational forms in the future, but for the moment, it exists as a “consultative hierarchy.” As AFSC attempts to shape proposals for effective organizational structures—in service of an agreed and well-supported Strategic Plan—an intense series of consultations have occurred at every level among both staff and governance for over two years. Some believe the processes have been deeply flawed and insufficient, while others feel that the process has dragged on far too long and are eager to get on with implementing the Strategic Plan and its ambitious goals for systemic change.

We operate in an organizational culture in which everyone feels that they have a right to be heard—and rightly so. The question remains how to determine when you have heard enough, and whether it is time for those vested with the authority to do so should actually make decisions. Inevitably, not every opinion that is “heard” will be incorporated into proposals. Among the cacophony of contending voices, decision makers must discern the best path forward as best they can—knowing that some people will be disappointed or even outraged—and continue to feel unheard.

Once the various working groups complete their work and emerging proposals are combined, they will be subject to a further seasoning process—hopefully later this spring. This seasoning process will include opportunities for Corporation members to respond to the proposals—building on two listening sessions held in February and further discussion planned for the coming Annual Meeting in April. Feedback received from all groups and individuals will be considered seriously and, as possible, incorporated into revised proposals for Board consideration, either at the June Board meeting or whenever the process is complete.

We would ask you to hold the staff and governance members engaged in these processes in the Light, as they are struggling with sincerity, hope and creative imagination to discern what is good and strong that should be maintained and further strengthened and those elements that are less effective that can benefit from appropriate change. Reaching unity on these issues will be a great relief and will allow us to focus on the work for justice and peace in the United States and around the world.

As we bring this letter to a close, we should acknowledge that AFSC suffers from an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust in many directions. This is not a new situation; it has built up over many years, in part as a response to a heartbreaking series of budget cuts, both in the wake of the financial crisis of 2009-10, as well as two additional rounds of cuts more recently. Those difficult experiences leave many staff members feeling insecure in their own jobs, as well as a sense of grief for the colleagues and valuable programs that have been lost. We hope that the new Strategic Plan will provide the basis for renewal

and creative programming, and that we can engage in an extended process of healing and reconciliation that will reestablish trust among all those involved. As Scott reminded the Board in a recent report from his position as interim co-clerk of AFSC's Community, Equality and Justice Committee:

*Next, trust:
look for presence of Spirit;
build genuine trusting relationships.*

Finally, we would like to encourage Friends to take advantage of several ways to become involved with AFSC:

- Most immediately, as part of the Annual Meeting of the Corporation, AFSC is offering a series of program presentations from April 3-7. **These are open to everyone**, and can be accessed [here](https://www.afsc.org/corporation2022). [<https://www.afsc.org/corporation2022>]
- Second, AFSC has been setting up liaisons in all Friends Meetings and Churches. Feel free to volunteer to be a liaison to your meeting or church [here](https://www.afsc.org/friends-liaison-contact-information). [[https://www.afsc.org/friends-liaison-contact information](https://www.afsc.org/friends-liaison-contact-information)]
- Third, AFSC is always looking for Friends to serve on a range of committees. You can find forms to nominate yourself or someone else on the AFSC website [here](https://www.afsc.org/governance-recruitment). [<https://www.afsc.org/governance-recruitment>]

With deep desire for lasting peace with justice,

Scott Rhodewalt
Northeast Kingdom Quaker Meeting, recent Interim Clerk, Community Equality & Justice Committee

Becky Steele
Portland Friends Meeting, member AFSC Stewardship Committee

Peter Woodrow
Portland Friends Meeting, member AFSC Board and Recording Clerk, Clerk of Governance Committee, and member, Board Working Group on the Governance Role in Program Decision Making



What is AFSC's 2020-2030 Strategic Plan?

In June 2020, the AFSC Board of Directors approved a ten-year Strategic Plan following two years of a widely inclusive process. The plan both affirms our historic commitment to listen closely to, and be led by, communities impacted by systemic injustice, and challenges us to be even more faithful and intentional in this important aspect of our work. The plan includes vital commitments to anti-racism, feminism, and incorporating youth in programs and organizational life. It also challenges us to think intersectionally and globally and affirms AFSC as an organization focused on systems change through three thematic goals with a cross cutting commitment to climate justice. The full Strategic Plan can be found online at afsc.org/strategicplan.

What was the cost of the strategic planning process?

In 2018, the AFSC Board dedicated some organizational resources to strategic planning. Hundreds of staff, volunteers, community members and partners were involved in ways big and small. We see this as an investment in our future and a necessity to make sure that our work is both strategic and aligned with our values. Overall, approximately \$400,000 was spent over a three-year period, and the project was in part supported with restricted donations from supporters. We held dozens of in-person meetings of staff and community members—a request that was made by staff and was widely agreed-upon by all. In each year, strategic planning never exceeded 1% of our budget. The Strategic Plan was unanimously approved by our Board of Directors and shares broad buy-in by staff because it was done purposefully and well. As we entered our second century of service, this process was critical in creating a shared vision together, but also in developing relationships, shared understandings, and a united, colorful, and creative community across the various divides.

Why consider restructuring?

The fundamental question before us now is how best to organize ourselves to advance our recently established strategic goals. AFSC's leadership team recognizes that staff, partners, and communities, have made tremendous gains under the organization's current structure. We also see opportunity for deeper connection and greater impact. In proposing to modify structures, we aim to strengthen AFSC's ability to transform systems of oppression and injustice while maintaining what makes our work effective and unique.

What could restructuring accomplish?

AFSC has been trying to operate more holistically – as an interconnected global organization -- under our current structure for years. While we have been successful in some areas, some consistent challenges remain. Our current issue-based collaboratives in the U.S. have done an excellent job coordinating efforts that center and honor impacted communities and their vision for change. However, these efforts have also suffered from a lack of consistent financial and staffing resources, and accountable decision-making mechanisms. As a result, some of our planning at the thematic level remains fragmented and unable to scale up the work from local to national and global. There are currently limits to our ability to plan, design, and implement an integrated program-based global approach in accordance with our Strategic Plan. Restructuring could:

- Help create more comprehensive and well-resourced systems of support for local, national, and international work.
- Create more opportunities to elevate or lift up locally-led work and best practices.
- Manage

knowledge, harness shared wisdom, and build learning and cohesion across programs globally.

- Promote the creation and implementation of collectively-developed long-term strategies to accomplish shared outcomes from the Strategic Plan
- Help us live up to our commitments for climate justice, youth work, racial justice, and gender justice.
- Open programmatic, fundraising, and budgeting opportunities that are being missed in our current approach.

Changes are being proposed with an eye toward maximizing our overall programmatic influence and impact.

What is the process for restructuring?

As the strategic planning process was proceeding, the Board of Directors asked the general secretary to consider what changes she would recommend to better enable the implementation of the Strategic Plan. In response, the general secretary, in concert with the Leadership Team (management) made various proposals in April 2021, following a long consultative process facilitated by external consultants, that were presented to staff and governance members for initial reflection. In June 2021, the decision was made to give additional time for further refinement and to build greater unity before the proposals are seasoned by the Board of Directors and Corporation.

This work is ongoing, and several working groups have been created and are meeting (see below). We are encouraged by these active co-design processes. We feel confident that all staff and governance members are committed to processes and concrete outcomes that affirm our Quaker values—and that all members of the AFSC community are in unity regarding our commitments to achieving systemic change that builds a better world. We now hope to bring proposals for seasoning to staff, the Board and Corporation in spring 2022 and to complete our reorganizing plan by June 2022.

It is true that some AFSC members consider this process rushed, but others consider it very late. We think that by providing an additional year for consultation we have found the right balance.

What groups are working on the co-design of reorganization?

There are four groups hard at work and one to form in the coming weeks.

- The US Program Co-Design Working Group includes union liaisons, regional management, and three members of the Leadership Team, and is being facilitated by Rebecca Subar from Dragonfly Partners, based in Philadelphia.
- There also is a Working Group on Global Cohesion that has now formed and met several times, and which staff are co-facilitating. Twenty members from across the organization are discerning

what we need to build a global, learning, and cohesive organization aligned with our Strategic Plan, and what structure we need to ensure our success.

- International Programs proposal is well developed from consultations and a series of IP all-staff meetings from May – August 2021. A few elements require additional discernment. Several smaller working groups, comprised of IP staff are reviewing job descriptions, planning for an IP Staff Council, and refining proposal elements.
- The Board Working Group on the Role of Governance in Program Decision Making continues to engage the AFSC community in development of governance proposals and is hosting sessions with Board, governance and Corporation members throughout February and March.

- Finally, a Harmonization Team will be formed from representatives all the groups. It has been set up to consider areas of divergence, gaps and harmony, and overall alignment within the emerging proposals from the four groups.

We consider our approach to be highly consultative. Areas of unity will be highlighted at the close of the process and we also will seek to be transparent about where areas of disagreement remain.

[Who will decide about the reorganizing plan?](#)

The general secretary is charged with bringing forward recommendations about any changes in staff organizational divisions to the Board of Directors for final approval. Our goal is to bring forward proposals with the greatest unity possible, while being transparent that not every suggestion will be accepted.

[What changes have been proposed for U.S. programs and why?](#)

The Leadership Team's most recent proposals (initial draft shared in April 2021, but in process) seeks to address several considerations specific to the U.S.:

- Our Strategic Plan challenges us to “work with communities and partners worldwide to challenge unjust systems and promote lasting peace.” Challenging systems requires concerted efforts, rooted in our methodologies of community organizing, research and advocacy, at the local, state, and national levels. We are most successful when we achieve these linkages.
- At present, our almost 25 programs across the country plan their work independently. There is no mechanism in place for collectively setting shared outcomes, and short- and long-term objectives based on our three thematic areas: just peace, just migration, and just economies. A reimagined structure could open the way for stronger collaboration and increase impact for systems change.
- At present, programmatic funding is determined and managed at the regional level. There is no easy mechanism to fund and manage national or multi-location collaborative efforts. There are also disparities in programmatic access to funds as a result of the regional structure which makes it harder to find sufficient resources to support shared outcomes and collaborative approaches and allocate funds in alignment with our three strategic programmatic goals.
- Few staff are able to devote consistent, full-time attention to developing collaborative, national or multi-location work within and across issue areas.
- Each regional executive committee, by design, maintains a number of local programs within a fairly large region in the US, which does not encourage deep exploration and support of more intersectional, collaborative work between regions, across issue areas, and the provision of resources needed to support such work.

With these considerations in mind, the Leadership Team has proposed restructuring to align our staffing structure with the three thematic areas of the Strategic Plan. We hope this will create more opportunities

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for program-led, cross-regional, and global collaboration. We recognize the importance of power-sharing and are committed to co-designing mechanisms that facilitate that. We see potential for AFSC to achieve both tremendous local successes and equally effective broad-based, state and national impact and systems change. As we move forward, we look forward to co-designing and seasoning this work with staff and governance.

[Will AFSC continue to invest in locally-led programs and activities?](#)

Yes. In fact, all our initial proposals, including the governance proposal (in accord with the Strategic

Plan), underscore strengthening local advisory committees and community input in local programs and activities. We hope also to generate more streamlined ways for volunteers at the local level to get more involved with AFSC at multiple levels. Our proposals lift up grassroots organizing at the local level as one of our principal strategies for work. Connecting community-grounded work with our broader advocacy efforts is one of AFSC's hallmarks.

In the coming years, we hope to grow our budgets for locally-led work, and also to bring additional capacity to strengthen our collective impact. Over the past five years, AFSC has dedicated millions of dollars to locally-led efforts. This will not change, and our plan is to expand in ways that are in keeping with the special character of AFSC.

How do we account for diverse voices in the process?

We believe that all members of the AFSC community are motivated by deep love for and commitment to AFSC and the communities with whom we work. There are many diverse voices to attend to within the AFSC community. The fundamental question is about how best to organize ourselves to advance our recently established strategic goals—and a passionate discussion is alive at AFSC on just those issues. Disagreements are to be expected, and good faith dialogue on the substance is welcome.

What new capacities could be a part of a restructured AFSC?

This is very much in discussion, but one of the proposals produced by the Leadership Team (shared in April 2021, but in process) is to bolster both the US and International Divisions with additional program staff that have expertise in the areas central to the Strategic Plan—just peace, just migration, and just economies—and that provide solid support to all our programs, build learning and cohesion across programs globally, and ensure we can live up to our commitments for climate justice, youth work, racial justice, and gender justice. Funds allocated to restructuring support in our budget are a placeholder in anticipation of a completed and approved structure; they do not preempt decisions that will culminate from this revived process.

Unfortunately, these proposed new positions have been mischaracterized by some as “middle management.” It also has been incorrectly stated that our program work will no longer be locally-led, and rather “run” from Philadelphia. This is not true in a number of ways.

First, we seek talent from anywhere we can find it, whether from our existing staff or from new team members, and staff may be located in or out of Philadelphia. Second, we believe in leadership that builds up from local insights. Any new staff members would be charged with elevating and enlarging the locally led work, and not having it conform to some top-down approach or pre-set ideas. We are trying to move

away from dichotomies that say either we have local staff or we have national staff. Staff with strong programmatic expertise who understand grassroots-led advocacy should be able to move between the two approaches and understand how local (or state)-level work can inform the national and vice versus.

More complete proposals about specific positions are still forthcoming in the coming months.

What is the People's AFSC?

Some staff have created an anonymous online forum called the “People's AFSC” to advance their

concerns about the restructuring process and proposals. While we might argue about the accuracy of some of their statements, we will not question their intentions—as we hope that others will afford us the same courtesy. We are quite aware that there are passionate voices among staff and governance who would like the current arrangements to continue. Because the group is anonymous, we have no way to verify the composition of the group, nor their methods of working. We also acknowledge that some prefer feedback to be anonymous. Therefore, we have provided [avenues for anonymous feedback](#) on our intranet, Star Cafe.

We have been open and receptive to dialogue, including with participants in the People’s AFSC, to join us in a spirit of mutual collaboration. A revived and active process is underway, engaging the U.S. unions, US and International staff, and a wide range of governance members. The intent is to create processes and structures needed to implement our Strategic Plan. Along with our standard procedures for expressing concerns and resolving disputes, we consider these the legitimate, transparent, and productive vehicles for discussion and co-design.

How does AFSC receive opposing voices?

We would like to restate AFSC’s broad commitment to collaborative decision-making processes grounded in our Quaker tradition. We also affirm our peacebuilding approaches of building bridges, encouraging trust, and convening safe space for honest, direct dialogue. We advocate for these approaches externally and extend them internally within our wider AFSC community. We have policies and procedures in place to ensure that direct communication is the first step, and that we always conduct ourselves in the spirit of mutual respect.

We express our organization’s values by committing to seeing “that of God” in each other in all our relationships. We take seriously the notion of continuous revelation and will actively seek to learn from a wide range of perspectives, listening carefully for how best AFSC should move forward. All ideas and insights, from staff, volunteers, community members, and others are deeply considered when making decisions at AFSC. And we have created several groups of staff affected by the proposed restructuring to help give input and shape proposals for consideration. We therefore urge those with concerns to engage with us through dialogue via the many vehicles that are available to do so.

How does AFSC live into its Quaker Values?

AFSC has Quaker values at its very core. AFSC will always operate based on Quaker principles, and all aspects of our work are informed by and rooted in Quaker practice. Our Strategic Plan underpinned these principles by affirming our approaches and working methods but also by ensuring that one of our five organizational development goals is to amplify our engagement with Quakers. We also acknowledge that no one group has a monopoly on the Quaker experience or the experiences of marginalized people, and

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that AFSC, in its work in communities worldwide, embraces loving inclusivity based in the Quaker value of recognizing the divine in all of us. We use this [Quaker Testimonies](#) document as our guide.

Although we do not function like a Meeting, AFSC does put a great deal of emphasis on building unity and being deeply consultative and collaborative, probably to an extent that is greater than other organizations. That said, AFSC is a nonprofit with an executive, management team, Board of Directors, donor and compliance requirements, and real deadlines. There is a living tension as a Quaker nonprofit that makes us unique. It can also be the source of great wisdom for some and frustration for others. AFSC staff have lived with this tension and will continue to do so.

How does AFSC balance Quaker identity and diversity?

It is true that there are fewer Friends on staff than in the 1960s and 1970s. That said, we eagerly encourage Friends to apply for positions at the organization. Just recently a few new Friends have joined our staff. We rely heavily on the wisdom and spiritual grounding Friends provide through Quaker volunteers serving our Board, Corporation, and elaborate governance structure, as well as our local community advisory groups.

In the last decade or more, AFSC has made a concerted effort to lean into its affirmative action policy and ensure a decolonized approach in that our staff also is more reflective of the communities in which we work. Today, our Leadership Team has decades of experience working toward social justice and peacebuilding. We are diverse in terms of race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic origin, and life experiences. We are engaged in deep and reflective conversations about power, privilege, and inclusion; and we are committed to ever greater engagement with staff on these issues.

AFSC stands apart from many organizations in that the majority of its leadership team are people of color. Many of us are from impacted communities that we seek to accompany, and while our experiences of privilege are real, they are also diverse and wide-ranging.

Overall, in terms of staff and Board, the tables below show a select sample of our affirmative action data.

FY 2020 Staff Data				
	Organization wide	Central Office	US Regions	International
People of Color	65%	42%	65%	97%
Women	65%	62%	72%	54%
Women of Color	66%	44%	67%	100%

FY 2020 Board Data	
People of Color	40%
Women	56%
LGBTQ+	20%

We are grateful knowing that many hold the AFSC community in the Light at this moment. With thanks for your interest and care,

Joyce Ajlouny, on behalf of the [AFSC Leadership Team](#)

Update On Moses Brown School
From Dawn Tripp

Our Committee for Nurturing Friends Education and I have been asked to nominate three Friends and one alternate to serve on the Moses Brown Board. Those names and bios are attached, along with an alternate. They have been presented to the Moses Brown Board for initial approval and ideally these names can also be presented to and approved by NEYM at the next Permanent Board meeting on April 2.

I may have mentioned: I am currently working with the Moses Brown Governance Committee and the Committee for Nurturing Friends Education to draft a process and yearly calendar for nominating Friends to the Board. I am hoping to codify that process and timeline which would make it easier for someone else to take on the role of liaison among the Committee for Nurturing Friends Education, NEYM, and the Moses Brown Governance Committee for Quaker nominations. Once that document is finalized, I will share that with you and seek any further thoughts or wishes from NEYM with regard to that process.

I also wanted to let you know that I am serving as Clerk of the Head of School Search Committee in our search for our next Head of School. We have just hired a search firm to partner with us on our search and as soon as we have a Head of School role/job description, I'd like to forward those materials and letters to you as they are released, so you can update Permanent Board and so anyone who has questions can feel free to reach out to me. We should have a job/role description in hand by the end of April/early May.

Finally, also attached is a request/proposal from the Moses Brown Governance Committee and the Clerks of the Moses Brown Board, asking if we might be able to renew our lease with NEYM on a more regular basis.

**Moses Brown School
Biographic Summaries
2022-23 Trustee Nominees and Alternates
for Exec. Comm. & Board Consideration**

FRIEND NOMINEES (to join Moses Brown Board July 1, 2022)

Frederick Dettmer (Friend)

Frederick is an attorney who has managed his own general civil commercial practice firm since 1993, concentrating in federal and state litigation, not-for-profit law, religious rights and organizations law, and individual counseling. He currently serves as Counsel to New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends and to the New York State Council of Churches. He previously spent 15 years and an Associate and then Partner in Commercial Litigation at Leboeuf, Lamb, Green & MacRae. Frederick has been a long-time member of the Purchase (NY) Monthly Meeting and has deep experience in Quaker Governance, having served as the Clerk of the New York Yearly Meeting from 2015-18 and as Clerk of the Connecticut Friends School from 2008-2015. He also served on the Executive Committee of the American Friends Service Committee. He also enjoys being a baseball umpire and soccer referee at the youth and high school levels. His interest in MB comes through a personal connection with a current Trustee and his broad appreciation for and experience with Friends education.

Valerie Reischuk (Friend)

Valerie spent 25 years as a math teacher at the middle school level in the Berea City School District in Ohio, where she also served as Department Chair for many years. She had been a member of the Cleveland Monthly Meeting since 2006, before moving to RI in 2015 and joining the Providence Monthly Meeting (PMM). Valerie worked as a Clerk at Hinckley Allen in Providence for five years before fully retiring in 2019. As a member of PMM, Valerie is involved in meetings and activities connected with NEYM's spiritual growth workshops and resources. She is a member of the Peace and Social Action Committee at PMM and has assisted the PMM Presiding Clerk in outreach to refugee families, even through the COVID pandemic. Valerie is also engaged with a number of organizations in the local community and is a strong advocate for social justice, equity, and peace. She is a great listener, both energetic, positive, and respectful of others' ideas and needs.

Bruce Shaw (Friend)

Bruce spent nearly 40 years as a full-time faculty member in the Math department. Over the years, he served in the boarding department, was Dean of Students, Acting Head of Upper School, and coached track, rowing, and sailing. He has also been involved in set construction for MB theater productions for many years. After retiring from full-time teaching several years ago, Bruce has worked part-time to continue his support of the Performing Arts and in helping to manage various major events in the Woodman Center and around campus. Bruce is exceedingly thoughtful in articulating and considering difficult issues and working through them as part of a group in a productive way. He has strong sensibilities as a Friend and significant practical experience in terms of school operations. Bruce has been a long-time, active member of the Providence Friends Meeting, having been a logistical/scheduling liaison between the Schoolhouse and the Meeting.

**Moses Brown School
Biographic Summaries
2022-23 Trustee Nominees and Alternates
for Exec. Comm. & Board Consideration**

FRIEND NOMINEE ALTERNATE

John Barrett '63 (F) (Budget & Finance, Investment & Development); *Friends Alternate Nominee*
John was a Trustee from 2007-2013 and returned to the Board for a second term of service in 2017-18 before resigning when he moved to Milwaukee. He retired after a long career in Investment Banking/Financial Advising. His Quaker and Moses Brown roots run deep. He counts cousins, nephews, brothers, brothers-in-law, and a son among the MB alumni in his family; and the Barrett's have a long connection to the Providence Meeting. His wife Jane was a long-time, beloved member of the Development and Alumni Relations team at MB. John has been an active and valued member of the B&F, Investment and Development Committees, for which he has continued to be a dedicated and active participant via Zoom.

Proposal to Permanent Board
From the Freedmen's Fund Ad-Hoc Committee
April 2, 2022

Both Beth Morrill, clerk of RSEJ, and Robert Murray, Treasurer, expressed concerns to Leslie Manning, clerk of Permanent Board, that the distribution process for the Freedmen's Fund scholarships was no longer receiving adequate oversight by RSEJ and that some of the scholarships were not adhering to the wishes of the original donors. The requirement for the scholarship is that each recipient should be a descendent of a former enslaved person and either be in a program of education or express an interest in pursuing a career in education. The college or university the student is attending must be in one of the Southern States.

Leslie Manning formed an ad-hoc committee to look at the way the income from the Freedmen's Fund was being dispersed and to make recommendations to Permanent Board regarding the best means of making dispersals in the future. That ad-hoc committee consisted of Leslie Manning, Robert Murray, Beth Morrill, and Joyce Gibson.

Because RSEJ is no longer formally meeting and is unable to formally approve any further nominations for the Freedmen's Fund scholarships, the ad-hoc committee was asked to consider an efficient process that would be sustainable from year to year, match the energy available of whomever would be appointed to oversee the process, and follow the wishes of the original donors.

After researching Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) in the South that had schools of education, the committee focused on state universities that graduated five or more students in Education. Schools that served a high number of students in financial need, as demonstrated by a high percentage of students receiving financial aid, were prioritized. Six universities were then selected and communicated with to see if they would be willing and interested to work with the Yearly Meeting on the awarding of Freedmen's Fund scholarships. Based on these communications, the committee selected three schools to recommend to Permanent Board.

Because this is an endowed fund, any change to the responsibility for dispersal of the fund requires Permanent Board approval. The committee asks if Permanent Board will approve a new process in which it directs the Yearly Meeting Treasurer to each year distribute the annual income of the fund equally between Winston-Salem State University (NC), Fort Valley State University (GA), and Jackson State University (MS). With each annual letter, the Treasurer would restate of the requirements for students receiving the scholarship, and ask that the Yearly Meeting be given the name (and ideally a short bio sketch) of each year's recipient.

Submitted by:

Leslie Manning
Robert Murray
Beth Morrill
Joyce Gibson

Proposal to Permanent Board from the Freedmen's Fund Ad-Hoc Committee, April 2, 2022

A Short History of the Freedmen's Fund

According to a memo written by the late Finley Perry (lawyer and member of Wellesley Meeting) in 1995:

[The Freedmen's Fund] is held by the Yearly Meeting as trustee under a trust established by George Sturge of England in 1882 and under the wills of Benjamin Franklin Knowles, Julia Ann Boyce, and Henry Camp. All four donors provided that the funds should be used for the Freedmen's Normal Institute located at Maryville, Tennessee which was operated by the New England Yearly Meeting for the education and religious training of African Americans in the Southern States.

In 1905 or 1906 the Yearly Meeting determined that it was no longer economically feasible to operate the Maryville Institute and it sought legal advice as to the proper use of the Freedmen's Fund under the new circumstances. In a long carefully considered opinion the firm of Gardner, Pirce & Thornley, of Providence, Rhode Island, advised the Yearly Meeting on June 15, 1906 that it should follow the provision in the Sturge Trust which said that if the Maryville Institute should cease to be conducted by the Yearly Meeting, the trustees should thenceforth hold the fund and apply the income "for the welfare of and the encouragement of education among the freedmen and their descendants in the Southern States of North America and for their moral and religious improvement as in the judgement of the New England Yearly Meeting will best or most nearly effectuate the intentions of the founder as herein set forth."

For some of years, the Wider Ministries Committee, and then the Racial, Social, and Economic Justice Committee (formerly known as the Committee on Prejudice and Poverty), authorized the income of the Freedmen's Fund to be paid to Fisk University, Meharry Medical College, and Guilford College for scholarships for Black students.

Sometime around 2006, the Racial, Social, and Economic Justice Committee (RSEJ) asked committee member James Varner to reach out to Friends in Atlanta GA to form a joint committee (with RSEJ) to seek out candidates for the scholarships rather than having colleges and universities do that discernment. The Southern Freedmen's Fund Recommendation Committee was formed, and made recommendations to RSEJ for student scholarships. This new process was in use through 2021.

We recognize and honor James Varner for his tireless work over many years to find candidates for scholarships from the Freedmen's Fund.

Marjorie Leonard Hancock Memorial Minute **October 3, 1924 – August 25, 2018**

Marjorie Leonard Hancock was born on October 3, 1924, in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, USVI, and died August 25, 2018 at Cooley Dickinson Hospital while living in Leverett, MA. She was a poet, writer, teacher, activist, and Quaker. She was also a wife, mother, friend, and a strong, active presence in the Quaker community with a strong belief in God. A friend recalled that “Her presence in meeting has always been clear. Toward the end of her life her messages were often about love.”

As a child, she moved often. Her father was a Navy chaplain and his family moved with him from assignment to assignment. Sailing on a Navy ship to Guam, and living there, was an important part of her childhood. She loved the sea, and sometimes said she remembered feeling safest on board ship, out in the ocean. While living in Guam she met and learned about the Chamorro people. She lived in or visited many places including the US Virgin Islands; Guam; Shanghai; San Diego and Long Beach, CA; Brooklyn, NY; Shady Nook, Maine; and Winchester and Ashfield, Massachusetts.

When she met and married her husband, Charles Thomas Hancock, Jr. (1914 – 1997), a Quaker and conscientious objector, they were members of Scarsdale Monthly Meeting. They moved to Ashfield in 1961, after which her husband took a job at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Soon after that she took a job with the Amherst Schools, teaching kindergarten at the Munson Library in South Amherst. They commuted to Amherst together from Ashfield until she was forced to leave her teaching position because she could not get child care for her kindergarten-aged children. In 1965 they settled in Leverett, MA close to her husband’s job as a librarian at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Marjorie’s husband had very strong views about many subjects. Marjorie often acted on behalf of his leadings even when her leadings were in a different direction, but when her leadings were powerful she followed them, and he acted on behalf of them. They both believed in the importance of their work for God through the Religious Society of Friends, and there was never any question but that they should advise and consult with each other, and support each other’s work. They were partners.

They had three children: Charles Thomas III, Dacre, and Sarah. While their children were of school age Marjorie was employed at home providing childcare for the son of a friend, and also engaged in the life of her family and the Mt. Toby Meeting. In 1977 after her husband suffered a heart attack, a friend, Meeting member Laura Robinson, taught her to drive. Marjorie subsequently gained employment, first in a department store and later at the University. She retired in the mid-1990s to care for her husband, by then retired as well. After her husband’s death in 1997, Marjorie participated in the “Foster Grandparents Program” in the Leverett Schools. She also read her poems on several occasions.

For most of her life Marjorie expressed her feelings and thoughts in poetry and fiction, and later, in devotional writings after the manner of Friends. For her memorial meeting in 2018, her children collected some of her poems and writings in a book called *Benchmarks, Thoughts in Passing*, giving a copy to the Mt. Toby Meeting Library. Her poetry is notable for its joy, gentle humor, and recognition of the earth's beauty, while her writings show insight into the human spiritual condition. Marjorie had an abiding love for the natural world that led to her gardening and caring for animals. She acquired many pets and was herself adopted by wild birds as host and mother. To all creatures, her generous nature and dedication to their welfare were evident.

Marjorie was a pacifist long before she was a Quaker. Marjorie said her ideas about pacifism began when she was around five years old, listening to her father’s sermons. An example of her pacifist convictions is the

story told by a friend of Marjorie's refusal to participate in air raid drills with the public school class she was teaching in the early 1950's. She refused to have her students participate in drills because she believed young children should not be exposed to issues of war. She was fired from that job because of her anti-war philosophy.

Over the course of her life, Marjorie was active in Friends Meeting at Cambridge (MA), Scarsdale Monthly Meeting, and at Mt. Toby Monthly Meeting, which she joined in 1964. Marjorie was recognized as a powerful figure among Friends for her spiritual and social insight, her work with children, her ministry in meeting for worship, and her advocacy for peace during the height of the Vietnam war.

She was active in both Mt. Toby Monthly Meeting and New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, serving on many committees in the 1970s. From 1972-1975, she served on the Board of Trustees of the Moses Brown School in Providence (the New England Yearly Meeting school built in 1789); the Christian Education Committee from 1971-1976; the (ad hoc) Friends Educational Needs Committee from 1976 until the committee's work was completed in 1979; and as the Mt. Toby representative to the New England Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee from 1971-1976.

Marjorie was an integral part of Mt. Toby's ecosystem. She was a major influence in the life of the Meeting for 50 years between 1964 and the 20-teens. She was a fierce spiritual presence in the Meeting at the same time her spirituality has been described as "light-hearted." She was always dedicated to the needs of children in the life of the Meeting. Marjorie was a loving person all of her life. She was a survivor. She brought a calm. Her guidance was from within, a kind of a purity and clearness of purpose. A family member recalls: "Her way to change seemed to me to be like the steady dropping of water on a rock, the power of continual yet subtle force of spiritual resoluteness and belief in Goodness within All."

During her presentation on her spiritual journey, Marjorie said, "Wherever there is life there is spirit. We are trying to know God. Each of us is necessary to see God, we need only to open our hearts to listen with our inner ears, to dare to be brave, to be faithful to righteousness." She also said, "I am a willing captive of the spirit. I do not have to search for God. God is within me. There is an eternity to God and I am part of it." Marjorie Leonard Hancock died August 25, 2018, and was buried in the Mt. Toby Friends Burial Ground on August 28, 2018. Her Memorial meeting was held at Mt. Toby Meeting house on October 20, 2018.

Choices
Fourth Month, 2001

Joy lurks everywhere;
Choose joy.
It peeks around the corners
of our lives
Gather it in
Make room for it in your heart,
for it wears a loving face.
Step into the circle of light
emitted by love.
Let your whole life reflect
its beauty.
Pass on its blessings.
Choose joy.

- Marjorie Leonard Hancock

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Approved by Mt. Toby Monthly Meeting December 12, 2021 with final version completed January 15, 2022.
Read at Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting, February 5, 2022

2022-04-02 PB Minutes with attachments

Final Audit Report

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