

**Draft Minutes  
Permanent Board  
Called Meeting on Zoom  
March 19, 2024**

The March 19, 2024 Called Meeting of the NEYM Permanent Board opened with a period of worship.

**24-29 Welcome and Announcements**

Susan Davies (Vassalboro), Clerk of the Permanent Board, welcomed Friends to the Called Zoom meeting and requested the approval of two items prior to initiating the meeting's business.

**24-30 Request for Approval of a *pro tem* recording clerk for the meeting**

In the absence Willa Taber, Recording Clerk, Susan Davies announced that Liesa Stamm (Hartford) agreed to serve as *pro tem* Recording Clerk for the March 19, 2024 Called Meeting of the Permanent Board and asked Friends to approve this request.

**Friends approved Liesa Stamm to serve as *pro tem* Recording Clerk for the March 19<sup>th</sup> Called Meeting of the Permanent Board.**

**24-31 Request for approval to add an item to the meeting Agenda**

The Finance Committee and Friends Camp requested that the Permanent Board approve an updated NEYM bank resolution that is needed in response to recent personnel changes.

**Friends approved the addition of this item to the Agenda.**

**24-32 Opening Comments**

With much sorrow, Susan Davies informed us that Christopher McCandless is now in hospice care. She requested that we hold the McCandless family in the light and asked that we take a moment to be with Christopher and his family in prayer

Following the period of prayer, Susan Davies opened the meeting by commending the NEYM staff for very ably carrying out the work of our organization in Noah's absence. Most of the Permanent Board's business for the March 19<sup>th</sup> Called Meeting involves assisting staff in continuing their work by reviewing and hopefully approving measures for advancing a number of charges for NEYM staff and Permanent Board working groups.

In this context Nia Thomas reported that she is in close touch with Noah and Honor and shared Noah's deep gratitude for the prayers, love and care for him and Honor communicated to them by the NEYM community. The hallway in their house is now papered with all the cards and expressions of love sent to them. Nia further informed us that planning for Noah's return to service has begun with a focus on his primary priorities. Information on the scope of Noah's service when he returns will be shared with the Permanent Board when these are clarified.

In terms of other NEYM business, Susan indicated that Jackie Stillwell, Clerk of NEYM Nominating Committee, who was not able to attend the meeting, provided the Permanent Board with an update on the Committee's work. This is the first reading of the Committee's nominations, a second reading of which will be brought to the May 11 meeting of the Permanent Board, hopefully for approval. Friends are encouraged to share their thoughts about these nominations to the Nominating Committee.

Susan also brought to the Permanent Board's attention a longstanding need to finalize and approve By-Laws. She recommends that proposed By-Laws be reviewed and finalized by a small advisory group in consultation with the NEYM Secretary and the Coordinating and Advisory Committee.

### **24-33 Roll Call**

The tech host, Bob O'Connor, froze the Zoom screen order and Friends introduced themselves in the order they were viewed on the screen.

### **Permanent Board Members**

Susan Davies (PB Clerk), Liesa Stamm (PB *pro tem* Recording Clerk), Deana Chase, Darcy Drayton, Chris Gant, Beth Hansen, Carolyne Lamar Jordan, Meg Klepack, Fran Lightsom, Bob O'Connor, Carole Rein, Martha Schowope, Eleanor Warnock, Diane Weinholtz, Donn Weinholtz, Morgan Wilson, Kathleen Wooton.

### **Ex-Officio Members**

Marion Dalton (Treasurer), Scot Drysdale (Finance Clerk), Sarah Gant (Clerk, Meeting Accompaniment Group) (Acting Secretary for Pastoral Care and Governance), Rebecca Leuchak (Presiding Clerk), Nia Thomas (Acting Secretary for Programs and Administration), Carl Williams (Clerk of Ministry and Counsel).

### **Other Friends**

Polly Attwood, Fran Brokaw, Elizabeth Hacala (NEYM Events Coordinator), Janet Hough, Allia Sifferlen, Maille Wooton.

### **Regrets**

Kimberly Allen, Thomas Brenner, Martin Forsythe, Roger Jaasaitis, Edward Mair, Leslie Manning, Chris McCandless, Anna Radocchia, Allison Randall, John Reuthe, Newell Isbell Shinn, Willa Taber (PB Recording Clerk), Mary Zwirner, Noah Merrill (YM Secretary), Elizabeth Reuthe (YM Secretary Supervisor), Jackie Stillwell (Clerk of Nominating Committee).

### **24-34 Approval of Minutes**

**Friends approved the minutes for the Permanent Board Meeting held on Zoom on February 10, 2024.**

#### **24-35 Request for Approval of the 2024 March Bank Resolution**

Finance Committee and Friends Camp need an updated bank resolution that designates who can open bank accounts and sign checks for NEYM and Friends Camp. These updates are needed because of recent personnel changes. The updated bank resolution is appended to these minutes.

**Friends approved the updated Bank Resolution.**

#### **24-36 Request for Approval of a Revised Charge for Sessions Visioning 2025 and Nominations, as available**

Nia Thomas provided an update on the need to revise the charge and timeline for the work of the Sessions Visioning Working Group. As a result of unforeseen challenges, the original Sessions Visioning and Design process was delayed. The Permanent Board now is requested to approve an adjustment to the original charge that will separate the consultation and listening process for future Sessions planning from the establishment of a more time sensitive Working Group to conduct a search for a 2025 Sessions site.

If approved, the new Sessions Vision Planning Working Group will design a plan for consultation and listening among Friends across New England. The consultation plan will be developed during the Spring of 2024, and brought to the Sessions Planning Leadership and the Coordinating and Advisory Committee for comment by July 1, 2024, and to the Permanent Board in mid-July for affirmation. The consultation plan will be shared at Sessions 2024 as requested by the Presiding Clerk.

**Friends then approved the establishment of a Sessions Vision Planning Working group to design a consultation and listening plan among Friends across New England as a basis for informing a vision and the priorities for future Annual Sessions.**

**Friends commended Nia and others for proposing a revised plan to allow a more reasonable time period for conducting the important work of planning for future Annual Sessions.**

#### **24-37 Request for Approval of Nominations for the Sessions Visioning Planning Working Group**

Nia Thomas presented proposed nominations for the Sessions Vision Planning Working Group.

**Friends approved the nomination of Alison Levie (Bennington) and Matt Southworth (Hartford) (*pending final discernment*) to serve on the Sessions Vision Planning Working Group.**

#### **24-38 Request for Approval of a Revised Proposal and Timeline for the 2025 Sessions Site Search Advisory Group**

Elizabeth Hacala, NEYM Events Coordinator, detailed the proposed revisions to the timeline and process for conducting a search for a 2025 Sessions location. The revised process will reduce the scope of the original Working Group charge. The need for the revised process results from challenges in finding Friends who represent a wide range of needs and perspectives to serve on

the Site Search Working Group. Under the revised site search process, Elizabeth Hacala will compile a list of potential sites by May 2024. A small advisory group of Friends will work with Elizabeth to discern what specific site needs of participants should inform the selection of a 2025 Sessions Site. During May and June, Elizabeth will prepare a report on each possible site that will be brought to the advisory group for discernment. In July a draft contract with the top choice of sites will be brought to the Permanent Board. The proposal will include costs, benefits and any drawbacks for the site. Five Friends have indicated a willingness to participate in the Site Search Process and two others are in the process of discernment to participate.

**Friends approved the revised timeline and process for conducting the 2025 Sessions Search and appointing an advisory group to support the work of NEYM Events Coordinator, Elizabeth Hacala.**

#### **24-39 Request for Approval to Un-Designate Unused Nurturing Faithfulness Funds**

The Coordinating and Advisory Committee recommended that the Permanent Board un-designate the unused funds currently held in a board-designated account to support the Nurturing Faithfulness program. In May 2021 Permanent Board approved the designation of \$30,000 from NEYM reserves for a Continuing Projects account to support the program, as needed. Marion Dalton (NEYM Treasurer) and Nia Thomas provided background on the current request to un-designate the \$27,159.89 of unused funds in this account. Thanks to the hard work, generous contributions, and commitment of many Friends, the Nurturing Faithfulness program only used \$2,840.11 of the designated funds. Given the current shortfall of NEYM's reserves from the recommended level, the Coordinating and Advisory Committee recommends that the Nurturing Faithfulness funds be un-designated from their current purpose and returned to NEYM reserves.

**Friends approved un-designating the Nurturing Faithfulness program funds and the return of the \$27,159.89 unused portion of the funds to NEYM reserves.**

#### **24-40 Request for Approval of a Working Group Charge for Evaluation of the Volunteer Stipends Experiment**

As part of approving a plan for a three year experiment with offering stipends to volunteers serving in five leadership positions in the Yearly Meeting (Permanent Board Minute 21-43), the Permanent Board committed to appointing a Working Group in 2024 to evaluate the experiment to date. The Working Group's assessment should give particular emphasis to the impact of the stipends on increasing inclusion. The Working Group will provide a written report of its findings to the Permanent Board prior to its meeting in July 2024 and will have members present at the meeting to give a presentation and answer questions.

**Friends approved the establishment of a Working Group consisting of 3-4 Friends not currently receiving honoraria to evaluate the volunteer stipends experiment and to provide a written report of their findings to the Permanent Board in July 2024.**

#### **24-41 Update on a Proposal for Conveyance of North Fairfield Friends Meeting**

Sarah Gant, as Clerk of the Meeting Accompaniment Group, reported on the current status of North Fairfield Friends Meeting. The Meeting was discontinued in 2017 and laid down in 2021.

Yearly Meeting has paid for miscellaneous expenses to maintain the property since 2017 as a new owner is being sought. The original deed requires that the lot be transferred to a religious non-profit organization. Two faith leaders in the area have brought a proposal to the Permanent Board to utilize the building to establish an interfaith collaborative. Their proposal will be brought to the May 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Board.

Sarah asked Friends to consider whether the mission of the proposed organization is aligned with NEYM ideals. Several Friends commented and asked questions on the proposal. Sarah requested that Friends send any additional questions or comments about the conveyance proposal to [sarahgant@neym.org](mailto:sarahgant@neym.org) before the next Permanent Board meeting

The Called Meeting ended with a period of silence and prayers in honor of Christopher McCandless and his family, as well as Elizabeth Reuthe.