

The Permanent Board (PB) has met in four all-day hybrid meetings, held in different quarters around the Yearly Meeting, and in five, shorter Zoom meetings, since last year's Sessions. All Yearly Meeting Friends are welcome to attend regular meetings of the PB. A complete record of PB minutes and advance documents can be accessed for each meeting, on the NEYM website, by searching "Decisions and Discernment." The current Board has 29 regular members and eight *ex-officio* members. Nearly half of PB members are further serving on one or more Yearly Meeting or PB working groups or committees. We have mourned the deaths of three of our members this year and supported our Yearly Meeting Secretary after he suffered the violent death of his brother and only sibling in January.

The members of PB have been nominated, and serve on behalf of all Yearly Meeting Friends, to implement the decisions and priorities of the Yearly Meeting, as directed by Sessions. The Board is to thoughtfully season and decide issues of immediate concern throughout the year, and to be attentive to the spiritual health of the entire Body of New England Friends between annual sessions. Because PB (in conjunction with Sessions and/or the Coordinating and Advisory Committee) is responsible for the oversight of 13 Standing Committees and five working, research, or resources groups, and for discernment of ways forward for new or modified initiatives coming out of Sessions, the aspiration and longing to "thoughtfully season" can feel in direct opposition to the tyranny of time limitations. The work before us is urgent *and* important and each charge from Sessions, picked up by faithful Friends, is deserving of Permanent Board's deep listening, gratitude, and discernment. With so much to attend to, at times, efforts towards faithfulness in some groups have been dashed and disappointed by PB. We are frayed with anxiety and urgency stemming from the real catastrophes of the world we live in. Narratives spring up in different parts of the Yearly Meeting, telling different stories about where we are, and why, and who is to blame, and who is "right". At the beginning of the year Nia Thomas, Program Director, brought to Coordinating and Advisory the book *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going: Leading in a Liminal Season* by Susan Beaumont. One does not have to have read the book to recognize our condition in the title. We are all doing our very best to birth the emergent, but unknowable future for NEYM, and for a better world to come. For encouragement, I look to the wise and benevolent words Jeremiah Dickinson (Dover) offered recently to his meeting:

*"The work before us is not a problem to be solved but a faithful path to be discerned. ... Let us gather, ready to speak the truth as it is given to us and to listen tenderly and with open hearts to the truth as it is given to others."*

Susan Davies, Clerk, Permanent Board