

Background and Context: Proposed Changes to Nominating

NEYM is committed to nurturing a thriving Religious Society of Friends in New England where the diverse gifts given through each person are nurtured and barriers to service are actively eliminated. Together, we seek to liberate and nurture gifts and talents, given by God through Friends, for service, helping Friends do together what we cannot do alone.

In support of this vision, we seek to fulfill the nominating function of NEYM in a way that is responsive to current needs and conditions, based in relationships of care with individuals and local meetings, as well as coordinated and sustainable.

More specifically, we strive:

- To better connect the nominating function to the naming and nurturing of gifts
- To better be able to prioritize finding Friends to do the essential work
- To widen the pool of Friends being asked to serve
- To better coordinate our nominations-related engagement with individuals and local meetings
- Overall, to hold and respond to the work of nominating in a way that is holistic, meaning that nominators can consider the Yearly Meeting's organizational needs, the needs of local meetings, the gifts and service journeys of individuals, and how God is at work in all of this.

Background:

Over the past few years, Friends have taken a number of incremental steps to move closer toward our vision.

At Sessions in 2019, Friends approved a recommendation in the Clerking Structures and Practices Working Group's report to "redesign nominating processes in a cohesive, consolidated manner." This recommendation was in response to the observation that:

There are too many different nominating paths to important leadership positions in our Yearly Meeting . This fractured set of processes sometimes results in the same individual being asked to serve in multiple roles. This structural deficiency in nominating makes it more difficult to share and maintain best practices for recognizing and nurturing gifts that could serve our community.

Since the approval of that report, groundwork has been laid for a smooth integration, and Friends have taken first steps. The Presiding Clerk, Nominating Committee Clerk, Permanent Board Clerk, Yearly Meeting Secretary and Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator/former Clerk of the Clerking Structures and Practices Working Group have had lengthy meetings looking at the "big picture" of NEYM's Nominating work. The clerks of the Nominating Committee, the Internal Nominating Committee, the Clerk's Table Nominating Committee and

the Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator/former Clerk of the Clerking Structures and Practices Working Group have been meeting as a Nominating Team to explore points of integration and to set up new systems for increased coordination.

We now feel ready for the next incremental step—to formally change our nominations structure to reflect this new way of working by approving the following:

- The revised Purposes, Procedures and Composition for a more integrated Nominating Committee (see below)
- The creation of a Naming Committee (see below)
- The integration of the PB Internal Nominating and Clerks Table Nominating Committees' charges, and the Friends currently serving, into the integrated NEYM Nominating Committee.
- The laying down of separate PB Internal Nominating and Clerk's Table Nominating Committees.

We believe these changes will help us continue to move forward towards more coordinated, resilient, and flexible Nominating functioning¹.

Respectfully submitted,

Coordinating & Advisory Committee

¹ C&A recognizes that there remain committees whose nominating functions and relationships are not directly addressed by this proposal, specifically those with responsibilities related to appointing people to serve on the Friends Camp Committee, and the board of Moses Brown School (the Friends Camp Nominating Committee, and the Committee for Nurturing Friends Education at Moses Brown School). Integration and strengthening of that work would be an important further step, once this currently-proposed phase of integration is completed.

Purposes, Procedures, and Composition Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee

Purpose

In order to help Friends answer God's call, the Nominating Committee identifies, encourages, and nominates Friends with the gifts and skills needed to serve in a wide variety of volunteer roles on behalf of the Yearly Meeting. In this work, the Committee seeks to remove barriers to the full expression of the spiritual gifts and skills given through each Friend, for the building up and thriving of local Friends meetings.

This work includes, in its fullness, understanding the vision of the Yearly Meeting and what is needed to live into it; leadership development and capacity-building; nurturing a culture of healthy evaluation and feedback; and expressing gratitude and recognition for faithful service in its many forms.

Procedures

Through a consultative and integrated process, the Committee considers both the explicitly-stated qualifications (gifts, skills, experience) necessary for particular service, as well as the current conditions and needs relating to a given aspect of the Yearly Meeting's mission. Care is taken to nurture emerging leaders, and to create pathways for Friends to grow in their service. Particular attention is given to succession planning, including the preparation of rising clerks and other servant leadership positions.

The Nominating Committee uses sub-groups to delegate aspects of their work. The sub-groups will meet as needed to do the work delegated to them, returning to the wider Committee for consultation and guidance.

The Nominating Clerk facilitates the delegation of the work, creating or dissolving sub-groups, and appoints Nominating Committee members to convene and/or clerk sub-groups. In doing so, the Clerk and Committee will pay attention to continuity of good process, practice, and institutional memory; care for relationships with nominees; and the specific gifts and experiences needed for the work a sub-group might be charged to undertake.

The Nominating Clerk clerks meetings of the full Nominating Committee, occurring seasonally or as needed, as well as Nominating Coordination meetings (with the convenors or clerks of the nominating sub-groups and the Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator) occurring about every six weeks or as needed. Other members of Coordinating and Advisory may also participate in Nominating Coordination meetings.

In recommending Friends to the Yearly Meeting for service, the Committee strives to share both a sense of the gifts, skills, and experience of the Friends being nominated, as well as to help those who are approving the nominations to understand how the nominated Friends' gifts relate to the work to be done.

In all their work, the Committee and sub-groups seek to ground their discernment in waiting worship and prayerful consideration, seeking to be led. The Committee seeks to hold its conversations tenderly, taking care that—unless otherwise necessary—information regarding who has been considered, and what considerations have been, not be shared beyond those directly involved in the discernment.

A “shepherd” will be appointed for each committee or position under the care of the Nominating Committee. The shepherd should be familiar with the Purpose, Procedures and Composition of the committee or description of the position they are shepherding. The shepherd serves as the primary point of contact between the group or individual and the Nominating Committee. The shepherd is responsible for supporting healthy service, and if difficult challenges arise, communicating them promptly to the Nominating Clerk, who may seek additional support from the Coordinating & Advisory Committee.

While the Committee strives to bring nominations for approval by Annual Sessions, it is more important to faithfully find the right Friend with the right gifts for each role. Nominations may also be brought to the Permanent Board for consideration and approval between Sessions.

Composition

- Up to 15 at-large members are named by the Naming Committee and approved by the Yearly Meeting for 3-year, staggered terms, renewable once. Care shall be taken to ensure the committee includes Friends from a broad range of monthly and quarterly meetings.
- The Nominating Clerk is named by the Naming Committee for a 3 year term, renewable once. In the year prior to current Nominating Clerk's term ending, the Naming Committee shall also name a Rising Nominating Clerk to work with the Nominating Clerk for one year preceding a clerking transition.
- Monthly meetings are encouraged to recommend (to the Naming Committee) representatives for 3-year terms, renewable once.

- The Nominating Clerk serves *ex-officio* as a member of Coordinating & Advisory Committee, and is appointed by the Yearly Meeting.

Gifts, skills, and experience needed for Nominating Committee members:

- Diplomacy in inviting Friends to serve on a committee, working group, or role
- Understanding of the particular work for which they are nominating Friends, and of the gifts, skills, and experience needed to help this work be fruitful
- Knowledge of, and relationship with, Friends in their local and regional areas
- Organizational skills, including the ability to follow through on assigned tasks
- Time throughout the year for listening in encounters with Friends to understand the spiritual gifts, skills, and experience they might bring to service
- Reliability in attendance at meetings

Purpose, Procedures, and Composition Naming Committee

Purpose

The Naming Committee identifies Friends with the gifts, skills, and experience needed to serve as Yearly Meeting Nominators (including Nominating Clerk, Nominating Recording Clerk, and Nominating Rising Clerk), invites them into service, and brings their names to the Yearly Meeting for approval.

Procedures

The Naming Committee shall work with the Permanent Board clerk to host a meeting or other consultative process to identify needs for the next Nominating Committee and Nominating Clerk as well as to gather suggested names. This consultation shall include the perspectives of current Nominating Committee members, members of Coordinating & Advisory, and Friends whose current primary service is with their local meetings.

This Naming process shall also result in the nomination of a Rising Nominating Clerk to serve for one year prior to an expected transition in the Nominating Clerk service. The Naming Committee shall be trained in use of the collaborative nominating tracking tool to ensure awareness of on-going conversations between individuals and other nominators about service within NEYM.

While the Naming Committee strives to bring nominations for the Nominating Committee members for approval by Annual Sessions, it is more important to faithfully find the right Friends with the right gifts for service. Names may also be brought to the Permanent Board for consideration and approval between Sessions.

Composition

Annually, or as needed to allow for intentional transitions in service, the Presiding Clerk and the Permanent Board Clerk shall appoint a 3-5 person Naming Committee who shall name the Nominating Committee members to be approved by the Yearly Meeting.

Gifts, Skills, Experiences:

- Knowledge of the various aspects of nominating work
- Awareness of and commitment to inclusive leadership development
- Care for how the nominating work of the Yearly Meeting can strengthen the life of local meetings