

Recommended Updates and Adjustments to the Yearly Meeting Nominating Process

Submitted by the Coordinating & Advisory Committee
to the Permanent Board, 9/28/2024

Background:

In 2021, the Yearly Meeting approved a process of integration of several bodies responsible for nominating across the Yearly Meeting into an integrated Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee. While much progress has been made in these efforts over the past three years, it has become clear that some further adjustments are needed in order to continue this important work of integration, simplification, and strengthening support for service across the organization.

This proposal seeks to identify adjustments needed, and to restate the charge of the Nominating Committee to incorporate these changes. C&A asks Permanent Board to approve these changes, to better support the Nominating Committee, and in turn, all of the groups of Friends serving through the Yearly Meeting, and those on whose behalf these Friends serve.

Current challenges these proposed changes seek to address:

1. Chronic challenges to nominating and supporting the work of committees and other groups serving across the Yearly Meeting, resulting in persistent vacancies and lack of capacity to carry out the discerned work of the Yearly Meeting;
2. Scarcity of Friends with Nominating gifts and availability, currently divided between the Nominating and Naming Committees;
3. Overloading of the Permanent Board Clerk and Presiding Clerk in requiring them to annually appoint and oversee a 3-5 person Naming Committee;
4. Challenges in coordinating between two committees, placing further burdens on members of both committees, as well as on C&A;
5. Lack of simplicity in the current process has prevented the full benefits of Nominating Integration being realized in the past three years.

Key proposed changes:

1. Rather than asking the Permanent Board Clerk and Presiding Clerk to annually appoint a 3-5 person Naming Committee to nominate the Nominating Committee, charge the Permanent Board Clerk and Presiding Clerk to regularly nominate (to the Yearly Meeting) a Friend to serve as Clerk of Nominating.
2. All other members of the Nominating Committee would be nominated by the Nominating Committee for approval by the Yearly Meeting.
3. Because its functions have been integrated into the existing Nominating Committee, lay down the previous structure of the Naming Committee.

New proposed charge for Nominating Committee:

Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee

The Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee endeavors to discern the gifts and leadings of the Spirit given to individual Friends, and invites those Friends to serve on Yearly Meeting committees.

Purpose

In order to help Friends answer God's call, the 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 conveners or clerks of the nominating sub-groups, as well as the Program Director or other YM staff) 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 Purposes, 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 and 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 nominated by the previous Nominating 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.

Monthly meetings are encouraged to recommend (to the Nominating Committee) representatives for 3-year terms, renewable once. All members of the Nominating Committee except the Nominating Clerk are nominated by the Nominating Committee and appointed by the Yearly Meeting.

The Nominating Clerk is nominated by the Presiding Clerk and Clerk of the Permanent Board for a 3-year term, renewable once. In the event that a currently serving member of Nominating is approved to serve as Nominating Clerk, they will be understood to begin a

new 3-year term.

In the year prior to current Nominating Clerk's term ending, the Presiding Clerk and Clerk of Permanent Board shall also nominate to the Yearly Meeting a Rising Nominating Clerk to work with the Nominating Clerk for one year preceding a clerking transition.

The Nominating Clerk serves ex-officio as a member of Coordinating and 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

Commitment to a nominating philosophy of ongoing, long-term nurture of Friends' gifts and capacity for service

Reliability in attendance at meetings