

Advance Documents — 2025 New England Yearly Meeting

Streams in the Desert

Rebecca Leuchak, Presiding Clerk, New England Yearly Meeting
Providence Monthly Meeting

Dear Friends,

What a time to be alive!

The gift we are given is to hold gratitude and grief, wonder and woe, awe and anguish, simultaneously.

As we bear witness to this time of great trials, as we long for healing of this broken world, let us come together. To face our challenges, we know that we cannot succeed alone. Our community in the eternal power of the Spirit, that power rising and dwelling within us and among us, is what brings us strength and gives us hope in these times.

I am holding you in my heart and I am praying for the grace of the eternal Divine to dwell among us. May we prepare ourselves in Spirit as we make our arrangements to attend the 365th Annual Sessions of New England Yearly Meeting, August 1st through August 6th.

Let me invite you in your journey, whether over the physical miles between home and the University of Massachusetts campus, or the short hop to the room in your home where we will be connecting virtually, to consider this pre-Sessions time as the travel of a pilgrimage. Moving toward Sessions, each of us will be coming from one of the four directions of Turtle Island in anticipation and preparation for the Spirit-filled joining of hearts and souls in one space and place and at one time. It is a journey that takes preparation in a mindful manner.

And this year an opportunity toward that preparation will be offered in a time of extended worship on Friday, August 1, starting at 12:30 p.m. It will be held on the 8th floor of the Campus Center at UMass and more information is available at: <https://neym.org/sites/default/files/2025-07/NEYM%20August%201%2C%202025.pdf>

This option to enter into a time of deep centering and listening is intended to encourage connection with the Living Presence. I hope you will consider whether you are drawn to participation as a way to strengthen Friends' corporate yielding to the true power and purpose of our Yearly Meeting gathering to discern and to do God's will.

We each have the responsibility that God has bestowed upon us to bring our Light fully, to participate wholeheartedly, and to enter into communion with each other in Spirit-led attention to all that we do. In waiting worship, Bible half-hour, plenary sessions, memorial meeting, corporate discernment in the meetings for worship for the conduct of business, Spirit is present through us and among us. Indeed, even in our times of rest, and social connection, and meals together—and yes, even in the skits performed and goofy jokes told at the evening coffee house—Spirit will hold us and be palpably present.

In community this August, whether present via Zoom or in residence on the University of Massachusetts campus, I hope you will come to Sessions with that sense of an all-hallowed reunion. I pray as I prepare to join you in our annual gathering, that together we will seek the wisdom that the eternal divine Presence offers us as we work, play, rest, and rejoice together.

So to that end, I encourage you to spend time in the coming days refreshing your understanding of Friends' practice of corporate discernment as a way of conducting our business. (Re)read Chapter 3 of New England Yearly Meeting's Faith and Practice (<https://neym.org/faith-and-practice/decision-making>) and read carefully all the preparatory information contained in these Advance Documents—the committee/resource group/working group reports and the NEYM budget detail and explanations of all that we will be considering in our meetings for worship for the conduct of business. These documents represent the faithful work of so many Friends across our region in all our monthly and quarterly meetings over the past year.

Of particular import is our prayerful preparation for considering how we are called in the ongoing issues involving Israel-Palestine. I urge you to read and think about what Friends around our Yearly Meeting have discerned and minuted. Find relevant minutes of monthly and quarterly meetings' faithful discernment at <https://neym.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/MInutes%20on%20Israel-Palestine%20conflict.pdf> and together we will endeavor to discern way forward on the matter.

In deep gratitude to you all for the Light and Love you bring and in expectation of divine communion in our gathering, I am faithfully yours,

Rebecca Leuchak
Presiding Clerk

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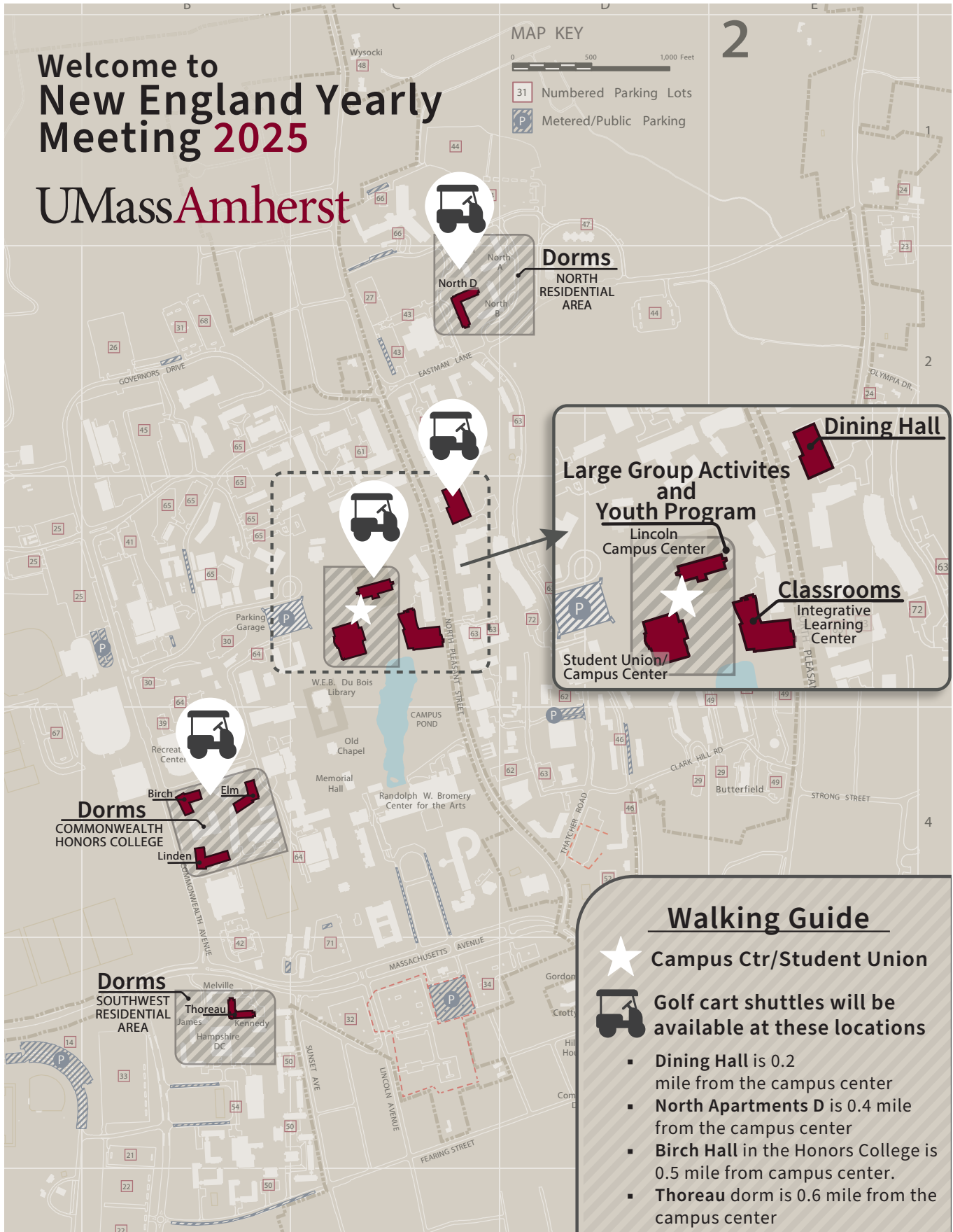
DRAFT Schedule 2025 Annual Sessions – Streams in the Desert

	Friday 8/1	Saturday 8/2	Sunday 8/3	Monday 8/4	Tuesday 8/5	Wednesday 8/6
6:30 to noon		6:30–7:00 Early Morning Worship				
		6:45–8:45 Breakfast				
		9:30–10:15 Opening Celebration*	9:00–10:00 All-Ages Worship*	8:30 Bible Half Hour*	8:30 Bible Half Hour*	8:30 Bible Half Hour*
		10:30–11:30 Bible Half Hour*	10:30 Bible Half Hour*	9:15–11:15 Meeting for Business*	9:15–11:15 Meeting for Business*	9:15 Meeting for Business* 10:15 Final closing, youth epistles, and celebration*
Noon to 3:00	12:30 Extended Worship, Campus Ctr 804-808	1:15–3:15 Meeting for Business*	1:15–2:45 Plenary*	11:30–1:30 Lunch		
				1:15–2:45 Choices ¹		Check-in (Campus Center, 1 st floor):
3:00 to 7:00		3:30–5:00 Choices ¹	3:00–5:00 Meeting for Business*			Friday: 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. and 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.
	4:45–6:45 Dinner					Saturday: 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
		6:00–6:20 Vespers	6:00–6:45 Vespers			
		6:30–8:00 Memorial Meeting*	7:00–9:00 Meeting for Business*	7:00 Musical Plenary 7:00 Choices ¹	7:00 Coffee House* 7:00 Choices ¹	To check in at other times, contact the registrar at 207-402-1773
7:00 to 10:00	7:00 Central Welcoming and Tours (Campus Ctr)					

Items marked with * will be hybrid events held in the Ballroom. Locations of other events will be posted in the *Yearly Meeting News*.

¹Choices is a period for workshops and reflection groups at Sessions. These 90-minute offerings provide an opportunity for Friends to explore our Quaker faith and make meaningful connections. Find listings at <https://neym.org/choices>
General and Family Bookstore hours will be posted in the Yearly Meeting News

Campus Map



2025 Sessions Coordinators, Officers, Speakers and YM Staff

Accounts Manager	Frederick Martin*
Bible Half Hour Speaker	Kirenia Criado Pérez
Children & Family Ministries Coordinator	Kara Price*
Clerks	Rebecca Leuchak (presiding), Megan Jensen and Mark Conley (recording), Jesse Grace and Beth Bussiere-Nichols (reading)
Health Coordination Team	Ginny Kristl, Sara Kelly, Michelle Wright
Events Coordinator	Elizabeth Hacala*
Office Manager	Sara Hubner*
Office Assistant	Jessica Shelton
Plenary Musician	Kim Moberg
Plenary Speaker	Gretchen Baker-Smith
Registrar	Martha Hinshaw Sheldon
Sessions Committee Clerk	Kristin Wilson
Tech Team Coordinator	Neil Blanchard
Yearly Meeting Treasurer	Marian Dalton
Worship Coordinator	Kristina Keefe-Perry
Yearly Meeting News Editor	Liz Yeats
Yearly Meeting Secretary	Noah Merrill*

* = YM Staff

2025 Youth Program Coordinators and Staff

Under-5s

Coord: Rainer Humphries

Abigail Adams
Carol Baker
Erica Bowden
Brooke Burkett
Jerry Carson
Peter Colby
Paula Rossvall
Erica Bowden

Junior Yearly Meeting

Coord: Kenzie Burpee

Annie Bingham
Darien Brimage
Bart Czyz
Rebecca Edwards
Martin Eller Fitze**
Charlee Gorham
Tyler Green
Newell Isbell Shinn
Craig Jensen
Leah Kelley

Katy MacRae

Susannah McCandless

Joli Reynolds

Arnie Saulnier

Emily Smith

Junior High Yearly Meeting

Coord: Amy Greene

Anne Anderson

Buddy Baker-Smith

Dave Baxter

Merritt Bussiere-Nichols

Jessica Eller

Chris Fitze

Tristan Ahern Hess

Young Friends

Coord: Collee Williams

Isaiah Grace

Sara Kelly

April Merleux

Kristin Sprague

**Young Friend volunteer

Elders serving to support ministry at Sessions this year

In Friends tradition, an Elder supports, encourages, and challenges the minister and helps them to be faithful. During preparation and during our week together, these individuals are holding and grounding specific Friends in their work and ministry.

Elders for Noah Merrill: Viv Woodland, John Leppman, Julie Forsythe, and Sarah Gant

Elders for Rebecca Leuchak: Deana Chase and Michelle Wright

Elders for Kirenia Criado Pérez: Carolyn Stone, Richard Lindo, Minga Claggett-Borne, Marybeth Toomey, Fritz Weiss, Jonathan Vogel-Borne, Cynthia Ganung, Maggie Fogarty

Elders for Gretchen Baker-Smith: Marian Athearn, Anne Anderson, and David Baxter

Guide to Business at Yearly Meeting Sessions

NEYM Sessions are larger than our other experiences of discernment, and again we will be hybrid, so a few reminders may help us proceed gracefully.

We encourage Friends who are joining us online to become familiar with Zoom before Sessions; you can find an instruction video on the Yearly Meeting website at <https://neym.org/zoom-how-tos>.

The physical room and the Zoom “room” will open for worship about 15 minutes early. Friends are asked to enter silently, to confirm that you are muted if you are on Zoom, and to sit in worship with the Friends gathered.

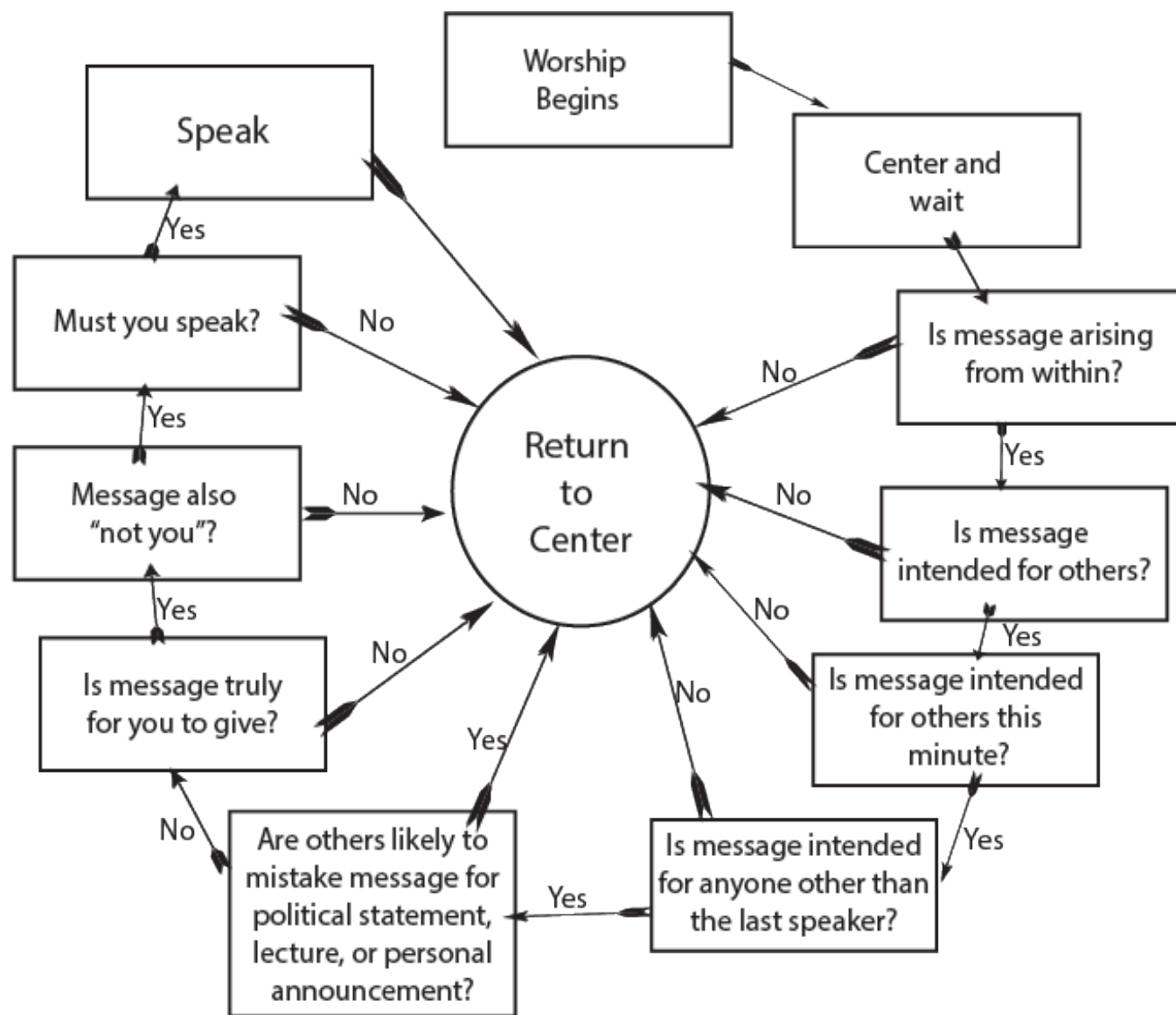
Worship with a concern for business:

- The Spirit may speak through a less familiar voice if our oft-heard Friends refrain from the urge to speak too quickly.
- The order of business items is subject to change, depending on the Holy Spirit and Friends’ self-discipline.
- We seek not compromise nor a grumbling “well, OK,” but clarity on what God calls us to do here and now, knowing that we may be led later to some further action, understanding, and love.
- Please look for text being presented. If it was ready by press time, look in these Advance Documents. Otherwise, it will be displayed on screen.
- The doors to the physical room will be closed to late-comers for 5 to 10 minutes while Friends settle into worship. Please wait quietly outside the plenary room. Please silence your cellphone. If you are on Zoom, please silence your cellphone, landline, and any other potential disruptions.
- For those joining worship with a concern for business in person:
 - Enter quietly!
 - Sit toward the front and center of the hall.
 - Leave room on the ends of the rows for late arrivals.
 - Reserve the wheelchair-accessible space for those who need it.

During worship with a concern for business:

- Stand (or raise your hand high) to be recognized. Use “Raise Hand” in Zoom (on the Reactions menu) to be recognized (on the phone, press *9).
- Remember that the clerk does not always call on people in the order in which their hands appear.
- When the clerk has called on you, wait for the wireless microphone to come to you. For those on Zoom, unmute yourself (on the phone, *6).
- Say your name and meeting.
- Speak slowly and briefly, limiting your remarks to the question at hand.
- For those in person, please be seated while someone else is speaking. For those on Zoom, consider lowering your hand—the person speaking may address your concern.
- Ordinarily a person should speak only once to an item of business, unless to answer a direct question or to signal a significant change of heart.

- If you are a Friend who does not speak easily, be bold if called. Your leading may be the way the Spirit has chosen to speak to us.
- Please do not try to argue the clerks (or anyone else) into your position.
- While the clerks are trying to formulate a minute, help by holding them in prayer. Remember that the minute will rarely be worded precisely as you would have said it.



2025 Sessions Business Agenda

Saturday afternoon, August 2

1:15 to 3:15 p.m.

- Welcome and Presiding Clerk's opening remarks
- Waiting worship
- Message from the Yearly Meeting Secretary
- Faith and Practice Revised Chapter: Testimony
- Introduction of the Unity Agenda
- Closing reminders of Upcoming Business

Sunday Afternoon

3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

- Waiting Worship
- Friends Camp Report
- Moses Brown School Report
- Nominating Report

Sunday Evening

7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

- Waiting Worship
- Message from Jorge Luis Pena, Presiding Clerk of Cuba Yearly Meeting
- Friends World Committee for Consultation Report and Reflections
- Quaker Indigenous Boarding School Working Group Report and Reflections

Monday Morning

9:15 to 11:15 a.m.

- Waiting Worship
- Our Year-Round Work
- Sessions Visioning
- Planning for Sessions 2026
- Ministry and Spiritual Life Updates and Recommendations
- Development Initiatives and Financial Stewardship

Monday Afternoon

3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Waiting Worship

- Yearly Meeting Treasurer's Report
- Presentation of the Proposed Yearly Meeting Budget
- Permanent Board Report
- Legal Action on Immigration and Religious Freedom
- Waiting Worship
- Message from Rania Maayeh, Head of Ramallah Friends School

Tuesday Morning

9:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

- Unity Agenda for Approval
- Waiting Worship
- Reflections on the Role of Quarterly Meetings
- Present Concerns in Our Quarters

Tuesday Afternoon

3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

- Waiting Worship
- Yearly Meeting Budget for Approval
- Yearly Meeting Epistle—First Reading
- Nominating Committee Slate for Approval

Wednesday Morning

9:15 to 10:15 a.m.

- Waiting Worship
- Remaining business

10:15 to 11:15 a.m.

- Epistles from Youth Programs
- Reading of the Yearly Meeting Epistle
- Sessions Coordinator Report on Sessions
- Presiding Clerk's reflection and sending forth

Unity Agenda

The items on the Unity Agenda are proposed for consideration on Tuesday morning. Before then, Friends are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Unity Agenda, to read the information pertaining to each item, and to consult with the Friends named for each matter, if need be. General questions can be brought to the Presiding Clerk, Rebecca Leuchak. If there are significant concerns that remain, items can be removed from the Unity Agenda for further corporate discernment earlier in the week.

Decisions and Actions Concerning...	See	Friends Available for Consultation
Accepting staff reports	page 30	Staff
Accepting board, committee, working & resource groups, and representative reports	page 35	Report authors
Accepting Memorial Minutes	booklet	Carl Williams, Ministry & Counsel clerk
Accepting the Purposes, Procedures, and Composition for the Meeting Accompaniment Group	page 19	Susan Davies, Permanent Board clerk
Approving nominations from YM Nominating Committee	page 26	Jackie Stillwell, Nominating clerk
Approving bank resolutions	page 18	Scot Drysdale, Finance clerk
Approving clerks' authorization to make edits and corrections	page 20	Rebecca Leuchak, Presiding Clerk

2025 Sessions Business Materials for Gathered Discernment

Faith and Practice Revision

The Faith and Practice Revision Committee will present a draft chapter on Testimonies, which you can read here: <https://neym.org/sites/default/files/2025-06/Testimony%20chapter%2006.23.2025.pdf>

Final Report—Quaker Indigenous Boarding Schools Research Group

At Sessions 2024 NEYM approved four tasks for this Group for the ensuing year:

- to draft and file a formal account of NEYM involvement in Indian Boarding Schools;
- to continue to engage with other researchers through the Quaker Indigenous Boarding School research network;
- to continue collaboration with the NEYM Archives committee;
- to suggest next steps, including further exploration of the “why” of NEYM’s involvement in the boarding schools.

The members of the NEYM QIBS Research Group believe we have completed the tasks with which we were charged in August 2022, to research and report on the involvement of NEYM in the Indian Boarding Schools of the nineteenth century. The roles of New England Friends as teachers, matrons, and missionaries, and the donation of money, directly and through the Associated Executive Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs and the Womens’ Foreign Missionary Society, materials, and clothing was documented in the report we submitted to Yearly Meeting Sessions in 2024 (https://neym.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/NEYM%202024%20QIBS%20final%20report%20%26%20sources_0.pdf) and to the Department of the Interior in January 2025 (<https://neym.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/NEYM%20DOI%20report.pdf>). That report has also been shared with the Indigenous Nations and Tribes most directly affected.

Members of the Research Group continue to participate actively in the national QIBS research network. Several of us presented our work at a workshop for the February 2025 FGC Gathering, together with working groups from Alaska Friends Conference and Baltimore Yearly Meeting. A similar workshop was presented under the auspices of Beacon Hill Friends House in April 2025, which drew more than 55 Friends from around the country (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpAtN6mcP9A>). In addition, Gordon Bugbee presented a talk based on the August 2024 report to the November 2024 public meeting of Friends Historical Association.

Members of the Research Group, with the assistance of the NEYM Archives Committee, provided the NEYM Archives curator at UMass-Amherst with a list of search terms to be marked as metadata for the use of future researchers looking for boarding-school-related materials in our archives.

At Sessions 2024, NEYM also approved our leading to open communications, as way might open, with the Indigenous Peoples of Ottawa and Pottawatomie Counties, Oklahoma (what had been the Quapaw and Sac and Fox Agencies), and explore possible steps towards offering a collective apology and asking what might be acceptable in their view. In furtherance of this work, Gordon Bugbee and Mary Zwirner traveled to Oklahoma in March 2025, with a travel minute from Beacon Hill Friends endorsed by Permanent Board (in lieu of Salem Quarter). Before traveling they sent copies of the NEYM 2024 report and an invitation to conversation to the 14 tribes most directly affected by NEYM's work. During their trip they were able to make some personal connections with tribal members, and visit two of the largely Native American Quaker meetings in Hominy and McLoud, Oklahoma. They envision a return trip as way may open.

We further believe that while the task has been completed, the work is not done.

In the course of our research, we learned how deeply implicated New England Friends were in the larger assimilation project. From John D. Lang and Samuel Taylor Jr's 1842 report of the "conditions of Indians West of the Mississippi" and John Milton Earle's 1860 report on the status of "Indians" in Massachusetts, to the advocacy of Albert Smiley and Myra Frye for the disastrous policies of forced assimilation, suppression of Indigenous languages and cultures, disruption of the relationships between children and parents, and the taking of Native land, New England Quakers were not just cogs in a larger system. They were among that system's architects and vocal champions.

The endorsement by these faithful and generous people of the prevailing ideas about how best to help Indigenous Peoples is not hard to understand. They were, like we are, creatures of their time. More difficult to comprehend, in light of Quakers' historically complex relationship with the State and our beliefs about how God works in the lives of individuals and communities, is their willingness to employ coercive measures and endorse necessarily cruel practices. How and why did Quaker discernment practices lead Friends into such harmful endeavors?

Answering this question will involve delving into the journals and correspondence of individual Friends and close reading of minutes from local meetings and relevant yearly meeting committees from the 19th and 20th centuries. Some monthly meeting records are available at UMass-Amherst Special Collections and at the Maine Historical Society. One of the next tasks, to be accomplished with the help of local monthly meeting members and attenders, will be locating relevant documents that will shed light on the thinking and motivations of 19th-century Quakers.

The NEYM QIBS Research Group asks to be laid down and recommends that a new group be charged with encouraging and coordinating the work of individual Friends called to take up this next step in understanding this disturbing and consequential period in the life of Quakerism. We would encourage this working group on "New England Friends and the forced assimilation of Indigenous Peoples" to publish or otherwise disseminate salient research findings whenever practical. We expect that this research and the findings of the NEYM QIBS Research Group will provide the basis for further addressing Friends' roles in the assimilationist project.

Contact with several of the Tribes identified through this research has been promising. We are hopeful that a renewed sense of kinship between New England Friends and the Modoc Nation, the

Wyandotte Nation, and others will emerge and lay the groundwork for respectful relations going forward. We have entrusted this work to the Right Relations Resource Group for support and guidance.

We are grateful for the support the research group has received and encouraged by the interest shown by many members of NEYM. Members of the current research group will be available for consultation and help in identifying members for the new research group.

JANET HOUGH, BETSY CAZDEN, ANDREW GRANT, MERRILL KOHLHOFER, AND GORDON BUGBEE

New England Yearly Meeting Committee Minutes to Review:

Committee on the Western Indian

Women's Foreign Missionary Society

Monthly Meeting Minutes to review:

Dover, Dover Qtr, Durham, Fairfield, Lynn, New Bedford, Newport, Portland, Providence, Sandwich (NH), Starksboro (VT), Swanton, Uxbridge, Vassalboro, Winthrop Center, Worcester

New England Friends' correspondence and papers to be reviewed:

Alford, Mary Grinnell, Starksboro, Teacher; Avrill, Sidney, Swanton, Teacher; Aydelotte, Phebe S., New Bedford, Womens' Foreign Missionary Society (WFMS); Bailey, Hannah J., Winthrop Center, WFMS; Battey, Thos. C., Starksboro, Teacher; Beede, Cyrus, Sandwich, Agent; Buffum, Thomas F., Newport, AEC; Earle, John Milton, Worcester, Mass Indian Comm, NEYM/CWI; Earle, Edward, Uxbridge, AEC; Earle, Anne B., Worcester?, NEYM/CWI; Elliot, Eliza Grinnell, Starksboro, Teacher; Frye, Myra E., Portland, NEYM/CWI; Frye, John J., Portland, NEYM/CWI; Grinnell, Fordyce, Starksboro, Physician; Hoag, Enoch, Sandwich, Superintendent; Howland, Edward, New Bedford, AEC; Hussey, Timothy B., Dover Qtr, AEC; Jones, Augustine, Providence, AEC; Kimber, Anthony M., Newport, AEC; Kimber, John S., Newport, AEC; Lang, John D., Vassalboro, BIC; Lang, Anne Almira, Vassalboro, NEYM/CWI; Lunt, Lina B., Durham, Teacher; Newhall, Wm. O., Lynn, AEC; Sherman, Mary, Rhode Island, Teacher; Smiley, Albert K., Vassalboro, Mohonk; Smiley, Alfred, Vassalboro, Mohonk; Swift, Sarah J, AEC; Taylor, Samuel A. Jr., Fairfield, NEYM/CWI; Thorndike, Henry, Dover, Teacher; Thorndike, Anna B., Dover, Teacher; Thorndike, Alice, Dover, Teacher; Tuttle, Emeline H., Dover, Teacher; Tuttle, Asa, Dover, Teacher; Varney, Sumner B., Dover, Physician; Wood, Henry T., New Bedford, AEC

Sessions Visioning

Friends, thank you. Two years ago the Yearly Meeting initially minuted the need to re-envision our Annual Sessions. We set out to re-align, revitalize, and "right size" Sessions to reflect current needs and resources. We were very ambitious in the way we sought to do this re-envisioning, approving a plan last Sessions to invite all local meetings and quarters as well as participants in our youth programs and other life-stage groups to participate not in an individual survey, as many groups might, but in extended worshipful conversations reflecting together on the possibilities and challenges before us now. Looking back on this process in which we sought to prioritize connection (with God and other Friends), set the table for broad participation (with clear information and thoughtful facilitation), and grow towards unity (even as our individual experiences and preferences differ), it is clear we have much to celebrate.

Meeting throughout the winter months, there were 36 Listening Groups composed of approximately 450 Friends with representation from all eight quarters. Most of the groups were based in local meetings, while some consisted of quarters or pairs of local meetings working together. Others were organized around life stages, including groups for elementary-age youth (JYM), middle-school-age youth (JHYM), high-school-age youth (Young Friends), young adults (ages 18–35), and Friends

who are currently parenting children and teens. In addition to age diversity, we heard from Friends with varied experiences related to Sessions. Between one quarter and one third of the groups included Friends who have never participated in Sessions, and almost all groups included someone who had participated in or volunteered for the youth programs at Sessions.

Many Friends who are longtime attenders at Sessions expressed heartfelt appreciation for various aspects of Sessions, including worship, spiritual nourishment, joyful multigenerational experiences, and small-group settings for connection and shared witness. Shared meals, informal community-building, and programming for youth and families were celebrated. Friends cherish the opportunity to connect across meetings and feel part of something larger than themselves.

While many Friends recalled transformational memories and enduring friendships formed at Sessions, there was widespread acknowledgment of the need for practical change and experimentation with new approaches, especially in light of increasing costs distributed across a smaller participation base.

Another key theme in Listening Groups was tension around the role of Meeting for Business. Some Friends see it as the central purpose of Sessions, as it has historically been, while others consider it just one component. Many Friends expressed a desire to reduce the time spent on business and/or to focus more deeply on fewer, more substantive agenda items. Suggestions on how to make this change included shifting some business to other bodies such as quarterly meetings, relevant committees, Permanent Board, or other gatherings of New England Friends, with stress across these suggestions on the importance of smaller or varied decision-making groups remaining meaningfully connected to local meetings.

Barriers to participation in Sessions were another frequent topic. Friends noted that cost (even with pay-as-led), distance, the length of Sessions, and life commitments (such as work and caregiving responsibilities) often limit attendance. Many newer Friends were unclear about why they should attend Sessions in the first place. This highlighted a need for both broader communication and more personal outreach by individuals and local meetings to encourage and support first-time participation.

While Listening Groups were not uniform in their reflections, a number did express interest in the Yearly Meeting experimenting with an alternative model for Sessions consisting of a shorter, long-weekend format. Although aware of the loss it may bring, particularly for youth (if other opportunities are not created), Friends felt this could lower costs and make attendance more feasible.

Another oft-affirmed model was a limited housing option, which would allow some Friends to have a residential experience while enabling others to commute. Again, this was seen as a way to reduce financial barriers while maintaining the spirit of Sessions. With this idea, however, came many questions such as how more fractured participation would impact the cohesion of the event and the need for volunteers, whose housing needs would be prioritized, and what logistics it would be realistic for individuals and families to take on themselves outside the bounds of the organized event.

Although this Visioning process was designed to inform planning for Sessions beginning with Sessions 2026, it strikes me that NEYM's move from Castleton to UMass this year creates a natural experiment to the theory that a location with commuting options for a wider proportion of Friends, paired with increased outreach to meetings, might increase attendance. As I write this report, registration numbers are hopeful but not conclusive.

In tandem with these suggested alternatives, many Friends also expressed enthusiasm for shorter gatherings throughout the year—especially those focused on worship, learning, and connection. At the same time, they raised questions about how simplifying Sessions might affect mid-year discernment and the activities of quarters.

If you are interested in a deeper understanding of the conversations held across our region, the compilation of all notes received from Listening Groups, listed in the order in which they were received, is available at <https://neym.org/sessions-visioning>.

On April 12, 2025, 52 Friends came together from the eight quarters of the Yearly Meeting, gathering at Wellesley Meeting for a Visioning and Distillation Day. Discernment, sharing, exploration, and reflection took many forms during the day. Periods of the day were spent in worship-sharing.

We were reminded that our shared foundational work as Friends coming together as a Yearly Meeting is both personal practice and the care for relationships across meetings. As we prayerfully reflected on what is required of us as “a people” on a shared pilgrimage of faith, we wrestled with ongoing questions including: *What is the most essential use of our time together at Sessions? What experiments is God calling us to now? How do we hold insights stemming from meaningful dialogue while listening for the call of the Spirit?* If you have not yet read the report summarizing the rich reflections arising from that day, I strongly encourage you to read the full report available at <https://neym.org/sessions-visioning>.

Although there were areas of unity and shared insight that emerged from both the Listening Groups and Visioning Day, extensive dialogue did not lead to agreement about the one best model for Sessions or the one ideal way to allocate our limited time together. While there is some understandable disappointment God didn’t deliver us clarity on the one true and right way to hold our Annual Sessions, I find it helpful to remember the insight we began with. We set out on this process to foster meaningful dialogue that would bring increased clarity about possible short-term experimental changes to Sessions. But more than this, we hoped to pray and dream together in order to build up our shared sense of how we are led to nurture our relationships with one another and with Spirit. As the plan for this process described, the goal is not to use market research to “fix” the current model to please more potential attenders, but rather to step into broader imagining and discernment about how Annual Sessions relates to the wider work of the Yearly Meeting now. With this deeper intention in mind, we have been deeply faithful and fortunate. That being said, we have learned that there is deep interest among Friends in examining practical barriers which impact attendance at Sessions (especially financial).

In discussing the shape of Sessions, we also learned that many Friends are ready to explore adaptations to our approaches to corporate discernment. Friends desire more spacious discernment at Sessions with fewer agenda items. Friends recognize the importance of the living connection between local meetings, quarters, and Yearly Meeting as well as of looking at how we approach corporate discernment throughout the year. Beyond corporate discernment, Friends see our relationships, worship, fellowship, and programs as a year-round commitment, expressed in diverse ways and at different points in the year, not just during Sessions.

Holding both what we know now and the questions we still hold, as we adapt the shape of Sessions in coming years, we will need to approach changes as experiments, with learning and growth (rather than perfection) as the goal. These experiments do not mean starting from scratch each year but rather continuing our practice of iteration and reflection.

So what else have we learned (or been reminded of) via this process? We have learned beautiful and tender truth about our condition. Many Friends in our Yearly Meeting feel a deep call to relationship with Friends across the region. We understand ourselves as “a people of God,” called to a shared journey of faith. As we step into new experiments related to the form Sessions takes in the coming years, we must remember that many of the Friends who have attended Sessions regularly cherish many components of Sessions and have powerful, precious memories of Sessions. Change comes with both hope and a sense of loss.

Sessions Visioning has also taught us about process. It was a happy surprise that so many Friends (of many ages) and from many meetings (both small and large) said yes to participate in this process, even though it required a real commitment of time and energy. Rather than reporting that

participation was a drain, many emphatically shared that the listening process in and of itself was of value and led to a greater sense of clarity and connection within the Yearly Meeting. While I am deeply grateful for this, it behooves us to remember the investment this process required. Undertaking a process of this scale requires much time and energy. Adding up the approximate number of “people hours” spent by Listening Group participants, Visioning Day participants, and Yearly Meeting staff, New England Friends spent at least 1,800 hours on this process and that didn’t even involve the actual planning of Sessions! Clearly, going forward we need to hold the reality that there is both significant spiritual potential and significant capacity required for such an undertaking.

Although the form that Sessions takes remains a “tough nut to crack,” this process shows us that there is both much to celebrate and important questions to continue to hold. As we adapt how we do things, what’s needed for us to experiment well and with love? As we live in a world with rapidly changing conditions, how do we maintain a healthy relationship between unrushed, ongoing discernment and time-sensitive organizational decisions?

In closing, let us remember the wisdom of Friends in regard to the Listening Group prompt, “As the Yearly Meeting moves towards new approaches, what indicator that we are on the right path feels especially important to pay attention to?” Friends named various signs that we are on the right track: increased and diverse participation and volunteering in Yearly Meeting activities, stronger collaboration between local meetings, spiritual sustenance, flexibility, a clearer sense of shared purpose, and grace as we move forward together in God’s care.

NIADWYNWEN THOMAS

Treasurer’s Report

So this is the point in our advance documents where we get to look at numbers. Aren’t you excited?

Our Yearly Meeting approved a nearly balanced general fund operating budget for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025. And, as in FY24, this was only possible by retaining the hold on all contributions to “Other Organizations” (e.g., FGC, FUM, AFSC, FCNL) and adding again a hopeful “contingency” clause, providing that *if* we were to meet the FY25 budget, 50% of any surplus would be used to make some portion of these donations happen. As I write this, the variability of Sessions costs and income in a new venue makes it hard to predict our end-of-year results.

We found it difficult to put together this current FY25 budget since a significant portion of our budgets is the cost of staff; a third of staff time is devoted to planning Sessions, and we had no idea as we were preparing the budget where Sessions would be located. That information was not available until December, when Permanent Board approved moving forward with the move of Sessions from Castleton (who could no longer host us) to UMass at Amherst. With limited options, and no experience of Sessions at this location to go by, Permanent Board approved this more expensive option in the hope that the change in location would draw additional attendees to help cover the fixed costs of Sessions.

This will be important as FY24 ended with an even larger deficit (\$57K, after a budgeted \$5K transfer from reserves) than FY23 (\$35K, after a budgeted \$30K transfer from reserves), despite increased monthly meeting donations and despite focused appeals during and after Sessions in August of ’24. Mostly due to the costs of Sessions, we ended the year having dropped our reserves from 6% to 3% of the following year’s budget, well below the recommended 25%. (The full set of FY24 closing reports are available on the Yearly Meeting’s website in the section Who we are/How we’re doing/Financial statements.)

Additional complications for FY25 include the fact that much staff time has been devoted to preparing and executing a process for discerning (visioning) a potential new structure for Sessions, in hopes of “right-sizing” our biggest event, as well as to planning for Sessions at an unfamiliar location.

One bright spot is the belated receipt of \$52K of IRS reimbursement from the pandemic era ERTC (Employee Retention Tax Credit) program. In addition, our Yearly Meeting Secretary has been working to create a new structure for development in the Yearly Meeting office. Consultation with a couple of development specialists suggests that we are doing the right things, but we need to do more of them.

Recognizing the need for a focus on development, and that our operational reserves having been nearly depleted, we turned to non-operational funds to support this work. The Future Uses Fund was created from a portion of the Legacy Gift Fund at Sessions FY24 for precisely this type of situation (leaving the newly renamed Witness and Ministry Fund with as much capital as it had when it first started).

Permanent Board has since approved the use of up to \$140K from the Future Uses fund (over the next three years) to increase our Event Coordinator's hours to full time in order to relieve the Accounts Manager and the Yearly Meeting Secretary from the need to coordinate development work. An estimate of an additional \$25K was brought for administrative expenses for development work (copying, mailing, etc.) for those same three years.

In addition, up to \$50K has been approved for more fundraising consultation over the same time-frame. The first fruits of this consultation include the pulling together of a group to visit local meetings to present an overview of the work of the Yearly Meeting, in order to focus on strengthening the relationship with both local meetings and the individuals within them. The group will meet this summer and begin their visits in the fall.

This funding was approved at the May Permanent Board meeting, so is not likely to affect this year's development efforts significantly. Which means it's up to each of us individually to recognize the need to support the work of the Yearly Meeting between now and the end of the fiscal year (September 30th). In particular, there is a need for equalization support, to encourage new attendees at Sessions in a year when we all need the connection and support of the Quakers in our wider circle. Together may we design responses to the difficulties visible in the world around us.

MARIAN DALTON

Budget Commentary

The Finance Committee met quarterly, and also had a number of Budget Subcommittee meetings. We spent most of our effort on the FY26 budget. This was complicated by a number of factors, which are described in the budget commentary below.

The Finance Clerk, Treasurer, Yearly Meeting Secretary, and Accounts Manager also worked on updating the Financial Handbook. This effort is still ongoing.

This brings us to the FY 26 budget. The first thing to note is that without knowing what form Sessions will take in summer 2026, we cannot come up with good estimates of either its costs or its income. The budget spreadsheet has a rightmost yellow column entitled "FY2026 Rough Draft Sessions." These costs are hypothetical, projecting the continuation of costs and income that we have seen in recent years. However, the model that we have been using in recent years is the least likely outcome of the Sessions Visioning Process that the Yearly Meeting has undertaken. We don't know at this time what model will replace it.

Fortunately, we do not need to know what model will replace the current Sessions model in order to estimate its effect on the budget. Sessions fees have been set to cover direct Sessions costs, plus a small fraction of the staff time that goes into planning and running sessions. Historically the amount of income above the direct Sessions costs has usually been around \$30,000. Therefore the important figure in the yellow column is \$31,000, the amount that appears in the Net Operating Income line for that column. This can be viewed as a guideline. Whatever Sessions model is chosen should generate \$31,000 of income in excess of direct costs to cover a small part of the staff time de-

voted to Sessions. Finding a sustainable model for Sessions should relieve budget pressure in future years.

A second thing to note is that for the third budget in a row we budget no funds to other organizations. We regret this, but other cuts that we considered were even more painful.

A third thing to note is that the bottom line of this budget is a small surplus. This does not begin to rebuild our reserves, but it is better than a deficit.

The Secretary has consulted with Michael Wadja, a professional fundraiser who is a member of our Yearly Meeting, to estimate the amount of individual and meeting contributions that we can expect to receive with the fundraising efforts that staff and some volunteers intend to make. Footnotes 1 and 3 explain the reasoning behind these numbers.

NEYM has budgeted some of the Future Uses Fund to support development efforts. The plan is that in future years we will grow our income at a rate faster than our spending increases, and thereby get to a surplus budget that will begin to restore our reserves to the level specified in our policy and to allow us to again give to other organizations.

A lot of effort went into cutting costs. As noted in Footnote 7, some mutually agreed-upon reductions in staff hours and COLAs (Cost of Living Adjustments) kept the increase in staff expenses lower than previous years. We are suggesting a cap on travel expenses. The Honoraria for Volunteer Leadership has dropped from \$15,000 to \$4,500, and will go to \$0 in a few years, after the volunteers who were offered this when they accepted their jobs rotate out of those jobs. (Laying down these honoraria was approved at last Sessions, but other methods of encouraging volunteer leadership may require additional spending.) As noted in Footnote 12, we are asking Friends Camp to pay for their accreditation expense, which saves a few thousand dollars.

We also propose to add an administration fee of 0.6% on the income from the Pooled Funds that goes to the Yearly Meeting (but not that that goes to monthly meetings or other investors in the funds). This would cover part of the time that the Accounts Manager spends allocating this money to various endowed funds and accounting for it, part of the time that the Secretary spends administering these endowed accounts, and part of time that the Office Manager's spends supporting the Legacy Gift Committee and arranging Mosher Book and Tract Fund publications.

In the last few years we have run deficits, in spite of making assumptions that seemed reasonable at the time. Why should this budget be different? Our Yearly Meeting is mounting a new development effort which will be much more extensive than we have done in recent years. We are also looking for a new, sustainable model for Sessions that we expect to eliminate the shortfalls in our budgeting for Sessions over the last two years. If these do not prove sufficient to balance our budget, we will have to look at deeper cuts in program and staff in future budgets.

SCOT DRYSDALE, CLERK OF FINANCE

The budget appears on **page 23**.

Public Statements

Legal Action on Immigration and Religious Freedom

February 25, 2025

Dear Friends,

As many of you may already have learned from media reports, yesterday the U.S. District Court of Maryland granted the request filed by New England Yearly Meeting, our neighboring yearly meetings, and other people of faith challenging the new administration's policy allowing indiscriminate immigration enforcement in houses of worship. This means, in part, that the Department of Home-

land Security is now barred from conducting immigration enforcement activities in Friends Meetings, except under very limited circumstances, and only then with explicit authorization.

While the current injunction is for the time being limited only to Friends meetings, Baptist churches, and Sikh gurdwaras which were plaintiffs in the suit, this is a small but meaningful step forward—and this witness continues.

New England Friends, alongside our neighbors in Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore Yearly Meetings, as well as our Baptist and Sikh friends and co-plaintiffs, now have the opportunity to affirm, as we have since the beginnings of this lawsuit, that all people—not only Quakers, Sikhs, and Baptists—have the right to participate in worshipping communities without fear of indiscriminate immigration enforcement or intimidation by armed government agents.

A press release on behalf of our shared efforts from Democracy Forward, the nonpartisan legal advocacy organization which is providing legal representation for our Yearly Meeting and our co-plaintiffs, which includes more details and quotations from several of the plaintiffs, is [available here](#). Resources supporting your local meeting and further information about the lawsuit are being maintained on the Yearly Meeting's website [here](#).

If Friends in New England have further questions about this most recent positive development in the lawsuit, or about the implications for your meeting, please contact Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary, at ymsec@neym.org.

We are deeply grateful for the Court's acknowledgement, in part, of this fundamental right. We look forward to the opportunity to continue to pursue this witness in whatever ways we and our partners may be led and able in the coming days and months, both as this case moves forward, and through other means. And we give thanks for the prayers, letters and minutes of support, financial contributions, and partnership of so many Friends and meetings in recent weeks. And we give thanks that we are in this together as a community of faith.

In the Light that shows the way,

REBECCA LEUCHAK, PRESIDING CLERK

NOAH MERRILL, YEARLY MEETING SECRETARY

Unity Agenda Materials

Yearly Meeting Nominating Report

The nominating slate appears on **page 26**.

Bank Resolutions

The following resolutions are brought by the Finance Committee:

1. That Marian L. Dalton be appointed New England Yearly Meeting of Friends (NEYM) Treasurer until a successor is appointed and qualified.
2. That Marian L. Dalton, NEYM Treasurer; and Noah Merrill, NEYM Secretary, be individually authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of NEYM as needed.
3. That Noah Merrill, NEYM Secretary; Marian L. Dalton, NEYM Treasurer; and Phillip Veatch, NEYM Presiding Clerk; be designated as alternate signers, individually, of all bank accounts in the name of NEYM.
4. That Kate Thornburg Monahan be appointed Friends Camp Treasurer until a successor is appointed and qualified.
5. That Kate Thornburg Monahan, Friends Camp Treasurer; and Anna Hopkins Buller, Friends Camp Director, be individually authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of NEYM for the benefit of Friends Camp as needed.

6. That Anna Hopkins Buller, Friends Camp Director; Kate Thornburg Monahan, Friends Camp Treasurer; and Natalie Bornstein, Friends Camp Committee clerk, be authorized, individually, as signers of accounts held in the name of NEYM for the benefit of Friends Camp.

Meeting Accompaniment Group Purpose, Procedures and Composition

Purpose

The Meeting Accompaniment Group, charged with a function of Ministry and Counsel (M&C), works closely with the M&C Clerk, Yearly Meeting Secretary, and Presiding Clerk to bring sustained and prayerful accompaniment to local meetings and quarters, with particular attention to walking alongside Friends serving their meetings in leadership roles.

Procedures

Accompaniment Group seeks to support and increase the capacity of meetings themselves to respond to the challenges they encounter. As needed or requested by Friends serving in local meetings, Accompaniment Group, meeting monthly and working in partnership with quarterly meetings, where possible and appropriate, assists with referrals to other Friends, including local meetings with relevant experience, and resources related to a wide range of concerns

Friends serving as part of this body:

- Connect with clerks of meetings and quarters, as well as clerks of their M&Cs, regarding the life of the meeting
- Visit meetings
- Provide specific support and presence with monthly and quarterly meetings in times of a particular need for accompaniment
- Read and reflect on state of society reports
- Pay attention to news shared in local meeting newsletters
- Consider reports of Friends traveling and visiting
- Participate regularly in monthly meeting leader calls, and contribute insights to planning for these calls
- Support and attend wider NEYM events, including Meeting Care Day, Meeting for Listening, Living Faith and Sessions
- Ensure appropriate information sharing with relevant partners (M&C Clerk, Secretary, Presiding Clerk, staff), in ways that are consistent and timely while maintaining appropriate confidentiality
- Coordinate and consult with the Ministry and Eldership Resource Group
- Invite Friends to join in this work as needed, in support of particular situations or needs for accompaniment.
- Offer insights to inform the annual NEYM State of Society report

Composition

Five to seven Friends, nominated by the NEYM Nominating Committee, with a clerk also nominated by the NEYM Nominating Committee, approved by the Yearly Meeting.

In consideration of the diversities of context across our region, local meetings and quarters are encouraged to suggest Friends with relevant gifts for consideration by the Nominating Committee to serve as part of this group.

The Presiding Clerk, Clerk of NEYM M&C and Yearly Meeting Secretary serve ex officio as members of this group.

The clerk of this group serves as a member of the Coordinating & Advisory Committee and ex officio on the Ministry and Eldership Resource Group

Term of Service: Given the importance of ongoing trusting relationships, context, and experience in this work, Friends will be nominated for staggered, renewable five-year terms.

Gifts and experience needed: Spiritual and emotional maturity, gifts in oversight, pastoral care, and accompaniment, conflict resolution, prayerful holding, boundary-setting, communication, and administration. Capacity for holding sensitive matters in confidence, with consultation as needed. Experience (past or present) serving in leadership roles in their own local meeting. Experience walking with those in servant leadership roles, mentoring, being a non-anxious presence. Joy in connection with Friends, love for and commitment to the nurture of local meetings as the foundation of Friends' life together..

Minute to Authorize Edits and Corrections

Friends authorize the presiding, recording, and reading clerks to make and approve edits, clarifications, and corrections to the minutes of NEYM Sessions 2025.

Present Concerns in Our Quarters

Falmouth Quarter Minute of Solidarity with the LGBTQIA Community

We received with appreciation the minutes in support of our queer community and family from Brunswick and Durham and the letter of concern from Portland, and wish to state the view of Falmouth Quarterly Meeting that as Quakers we unite in celebrating our belief in the diversity of God's creation. We ask all meetings in NEYM to discern the appropriate actions to be taken in this time of urgency.

We ask our clerk Fritz to share this minute and these documents with the Presiding Clerk and request time at Sessions to discuss this issue.

Friends approved this preamble and the minute requesting Fritz's role at Sessions.

Brunswick Friends Meeting Minute of Solidarity with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA) Community¹

People who would extinguish freedom have historically targeted others in society who are the most vulnerable and disregarded—individuals and groups with the fewest allies who are willing to defend them. Today's attack is directed at members of the LGBTQIA community—and especially trans people, this minority-within-a-minority that does not conform to conventional norms of gender expression and gender identity, and who can most easily be "othered."

The viciousness and danger of this assault is reflected in the threats that are now issued publicly without shame or qualification. "Transgenderism," a recent speaker at a Conservative Political Action Committee [CPAC] meeting proclaimed, "must be eradicated from our public life," a chilling use of the language of hatred. And in grim confirmation of the seriousness of this intent, the flood of recent state laws prohibiting gender-affirming care (not only for children and adolescents but also for adults) will, to a certainty, multiply the cost in trans lives beyond the already intolerable levels of violence, murder, and suicide that plague this beleaguered community, effectively eradicating trans individuals.

Brunswick Friends Meeting deeply value the advances in civil rights for the broader queer community and are aware this vulnerable group is under attack. Opponents to LGBTQIA rights call on the Supreme Court majority to re-legitimize anti-sodomy laws and to reverse marriage equality. Furthermore, not content with crusading domestically, some US-based anti-LGBTQIA activists have actively supported anti-LGBTQIA laws and campaigns beyond our shores—most alarmingly in

¹ Adapted from a similar minute by Quakers in Germantown Monthly Meeting and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in Pennsylvania

Uganda, where the recent “Kill the Gays” law imposed the death penalty for so-called “aggravated homosexuality.”

In such a climate, mere assurances of tolerance, acceptance, goodwill, and even support are no longer enough from those who stand for justice and equality. Brunswick Friends Meeting commits itself to stand in solidarity with LGBTQIA people everywhere, in ways including:

- Declaring to the world that all individuals are by right entitled to the sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression that are authentically theirs, and actively campaigning for laws and policies that reflect this testimony;
- Promising to provide a safe space for all LGBTQIA members, attendees, and other individuals who reach out to us;
- Pledging to continually educate ourselves on issues of concern to the queer community and charging our committees to consider how LGBTQIA issues impact their work and how they can contribute to advancing justice and equality;
- Pledging to be allies in word and deed.

Minute, Durham Friends Monthly Meeting (NEYM), June 15, 2025

Durham Friends Meeting considered the Brunswick Friends Meeting on Solidarity with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA) Community at its June 15, 2025, Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. Broadly in unity with the concern of the Brunswick Minute, we approved the following statement.

Durham Friends Meeting approved a Minute on Sexual Orientation in February 2004 (see below). We are distressed that the issues it addresses are still contentious and that there are those who seek to establish and enforce a different understanding, one that would denigrate some among us.

Today, in 2025, we celebrate the wonderful diversity of human beings in this world, including diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity.

We affirm our commitment to seeing all human beings as children of God. We decry any denial of this diversity, and decry recent efforts through law and shaming to insist on the binary classification of all human beings as only “male” or “female,” established at birth.

We believe that the laws and policies of the United States should reflect and affirm this diversity of human beings with respect to sexual orientation and gender identity, and should accord equal respect to all.

Portland Friends Meeting Letter to the Editor of the Portland Press Herald and Affiliated Publications

To the Editor:

Portland Friends Meeting (Quakers) affirms that our transgender and nonbinary siblings are beloved children of God, and we know that the World is a better place because of them. As people of faith, we feel called to work for justice, including for trans people.

We are living through a terrifying moment, in which people in power are using fear to create enemies out of minority groups for political gain. The focus now is on trans people and immigrants, yet we all stand to lose if we accept the demonization of any child of God. In such a climate, mere assurances of tolerance, acceptance, goodwill, and even support are no longer enough from those who stand for justice and equality.

We have a banner that reads: “We met God: they’re wicked Queer,” made by Queer members of our community. This is true to our experience. God is beyond gender; God is all genders. God is speaking through our transgender and non-binary siblings.

We commit ourselves to act in Maine and everywhere, in ways including:

- Declaring to the World that every individual is entitled to the sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression that is uniquely theirs;
- Actively supporting laws and policies that reflect this truth;
- Promising to provide safe space and refuge for Queer people; and
- Pledging to continually educate ourselves and others on issues of concern to the Queer community.

We urge all people to share in these commitments.

Mary Bachman DeSilva and Jim Grace, Co-clerks of Portland Friends Meeting

Israel-Palestine Conflict

Friends are encouraged to read this collection of minutes from the Yearly Meeting and local meetings: <https://neym.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/MInutes%20on%20Israel-Palestine%20conflict.pdf>.

Friends are also encouraged to read the Statement of Conscience from Intermountain Yearly Meeting at <http://bit.ly/4eYJsn6> and minute from Northern Yearly Meeting at <https://bit.ly/3IZiOOU>.

Budget

New England Yearly Meeting FY2026 Operating (Non-Camp) Budget Proposed - SUMMARY Version of 6/18/2025 - Approved by Finance Committee 6/26/2025							
Category	FY2024 Actuals	FY2024 Budget	FY2025 Budget	Δ FY2 to FY26 Budgets	FY2026 Proposed Budget	Notes	FY2026 Sessions placeholder break-out
Income							<i>See note 2</i>
4010 Individual Contributions Total	206,708.78	223,000	228,000	11,000	239,000	1	27,000
4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions Total	344,668.47	342,000	345,000	17,250	362,250	3	9,000
4025 Unallocated Income		0	0	10,873	10,873	10	
4030 Organizations Contributions	1,450.00	0	0	500	500		
4050 Interest and Dividend Income	7,172.34	12,000	11,000	(5,288)	5,712	4	
4070 Books & Other Sales Income	\$ 8,677.41	10,500	10,500	(1,700)	8,800	5	8,500.00
4080 Retreat Program Fees	30,422.00	37,500	37,500	3,850	41,350	6	
4085 Sessions Program Fees	161,365.50	249,475	214,895	(13,895)	201,000	2	201,000
4090 Change in Fair Market Value	72.07	0	0	-	0		
4099 Net Assets Released To/From	0.00	5,000	0	-	0		
Total Income	\$ 760,536.58	879,475	846,895	22,590	\$ 869,485		\$ 245,500
Expenses							
Total 5000 Staff	\$ 481,169.40	503,842	516,314	1,444	\$ 517,758	7	
Total 5100 General & Administration	\$ 102,604.06	87,449	87,449	6,201	\$ 93,650		\$ 11,000
Total 5300 Travel & Conferences	\$ 31,135.64	22,300	22,300	700	\$ 23,000	8	\$ 2,000
Total 6000 Programs	\$ 201,081.80	256,012	213,850	13,850	\$ 227,700	2	\$ 194,500
Total 6140 Books & Other Sales Expense	\$ 6,743.75	8,000	8,000	(1,000)	\$ 7,000	5	\$ 7,000
Total 6200-6590 Support of Other Organizations	0	0	0	-	\$ 0		
Total 6600 Publications	0	0		-			
Total Expenses	822,735	877,603	847,913	21,195	\$ 869,108		\$ 214,500
Net Operating Income	(62,198)	1,872	-1,018	1,395	377		31,000
Other Income							
9940 Other Income - Transfers from other funds	5,000						
Total Other Income	5,000						
Other Expenses							
9950 Other Expense - Transfer to other funds							
Total Other Expenses							
Net Other Income	5,000						
Net Income	(57,198)						

New England Yearly Meeting FY2026 Operating (Non-Camp) Budget Proposed - DETAIL Version of 6/18/2025 - Approved by Finance Committee 6/26/2025						
Category	FY2024 Actuals	FY2024 Budget	FY2025 Budget	Δ FY25 to FY26 Budgets	FY2026 Proposed Budget	FY2026 Sessions placeholder break-out
Income						See note 2
4010 Individual Contributions						
General Fund Contributions	179,020.78	198,000	201,000	11,000	212,000	1
Pay-As-Led /Equalization Contributions	27,688.00	25,000	27,000	-	27,000	2
4010 Individual Contributions Total	206,708.78	223,000	228,000	11,000	239,000	27,000
4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions						
General Fund Contributions	333,973.47	333,000	336,000	17,250	353,250	
Equalization Contributions	10,695.00	9,000	9,000	-	9,000	9,000
4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions Total	344,668.47	342,000	345,000	17,250	362,250	3
4025 Unallocated Income		0	0	10,873	10,873	10
4030 Organizations Contributions	1,450.00	0	0	500	500	
4050 Interest and Dividend Income	7,172.34	12,000	11,000	(5,288)	5,712	4
4070 Books & Other Sales Income	8,677.41	10,500	10,500	(1,700)	8,800	5
4077 Consulting Fee Contribution				-		
4080 Retreat Program Fees	30,422.00	37,500	37,500	3,850	41,350	6
4085 Sessions Program Fees	161,365.50	249,475	214,895	(13,895)	201,000	2
4090 Change in Fair Market Value	72.07	0	0	-	0	
4099 Net Assets Released To/From	0.00	5,000	0	-	0	
Total Income	\$ 760,536.58	879,475	846,895	22,590	\$ 869,485	\$ 245,500
Expenses						
5000 Staff						
5010 Salaries & Wages	360,924.10	380,988	389,236	(59,001)	330,235	7
5037 Housing Allowance				60,000	60,000	
5020 Payroll Taxes	27,077.77	29,146	30,195	(4,472)	25,723	
5030 Benefits				-		
5033 Health Benefits	52,982.14	49,199	51,796	6,603	58,399	
5035 Retirements	36,435.95	38,099	38,924	500	39,424	
5040 Disability	983.41	1,100	1,013	44	1,057	
5045 Workers' Compensation	682.00	760	600	20	620	
5050 Spiritual Retreats	727.00	1,200	1,200	-	1,200	
5060 Staff Development	1,257.03	3,250	3,250	(2,250)	1,000	
5070 Sabbatical & Paid Leave	100.00	100	100	-	100	
Total 5030 Benefits	93,167.53	93,708	96,883	4,917	\$ 101,800	
Total 5000 Staff	481,169.40	503,842	516,314	1,444	\$ 517,758	7
5100 General & Administration						
5110 Administration						
5120 Bank Expense	8,530.37	7,000	7,000	(250)	6,750	3,000
5130 Contracted Services	28,655.71	18,000	18,000	4,500	22,500	6,000
5135 Accounting Services		0	0	-	0	
5140 Legal Services	2,500.00	2,500	2,500	(1,000)	1,500	
5145 Infrastructure		0	0	-	0	
5150 Liability Insurance	6,835.49	5,250	5,250	1,750	7,000	
5160 Payroll Service	7,518.60	5,500	5,500	2,000	7,500	
5170 Recruiting Expense		0	0	-	0	
5180 Rent	9,350.00	9,350	9,350	-	9,350	
5190 Misc. Expense	467.93	0	0	-	0	
Total 5110 Administration	\$ 63,858.10	47,600	47,600	7,000	\$ 54,600	\$ 9,000
5200 Office						
5220 Archives Office Expenses		0	0	-	0	
5220 Cleaning Services	300.00	299	299	1	300	
5230 Maint - Equip & Hardware	89.99	500	500	(400)	100	
5240 Postage	2,200.39	3,750	3,750	(150)	3,600	100
5250 Office Equipment	237.55	1,500	1,500	(500)	1,000	
5260 Office Supplies	1,539.57	1,600	1,600	400	2,000	500
5270 Printing & Copying	7,415.95	9,500	9,500	(4,150)	5,350	500
5280 Software & Updates	23,017.05	19,000	19,000	3,700	22,700	700
5290 Telephone	3,833.26	3,700	3,700	300	4,000	200
5295 Misc. Office	112.20	0	0	-	0	
Total 5200 Office	\$ 38,745.96	39,849	39,849	(799)	\$ 39,050	\$ 2,000
Total 5100 General & Administration	\$ 102,604.06	87,449	87,449	6,201	\$ 93,650	\$ 11,000

Category	FY2024 Actuals	FY2024 Budget	FY2025 Budget	Δ FY25 to FY26 Budgets	FY2026 Proposed Budget	Notes	FY2026 Sessions placeholder break-out
5300 Travel & Conferences							
5310 Travel - Committee	1,536.36	1,400	1,400	100	1,500		
5320 Travel - Clerk	4,990.75	2,500	2,500	500	3,000		
5330 Travel - Programs	3,853.02	3,100	4,100	(300)	3,800		
5335 Travel - Representatives Travel	8,299.70	2,000	2,000	400	2,400		
5350 Travel - Staff	12,455.81	12,900	11,900	-	11,900		2,000
5360 Travel - Ministries		400	400	-	400		
Total 5300 Travel & Conferences	\$ 31,135.64	22,300	22,300	700	\$ 23,000	8	\$ 2,000
6000 Programs							
6110 Sessions Room & Board	127,106.70	169,442	135,570	35,930	171,500	2	171,500
6112 Retreats - Room & Board				-	0		
6114 Room Rental	13,988.00	10,000	10,000	1,700	11,700		
6150 Food Expense	9,413.65	10,000	10,000	(550)	9,450		
Total 6112 Retreats - Room & Board	\$ 23,401.65	20,000	20,000	1,150	\$ 21,150		\$ 0
6125 Program Expenses							
6105 Honoraria - Speakers/Wkshp Ldrs	16,796.92	24,000	21,000	(3,000)	18,000		14,500
6107 Honoraria - Volunteer Leadership	11,250.00	15,000	15,000	(10,500)	4,500	9	
6115 Equipment Rental	7,708.79	6,500	6,500	(2,500)	4,000		4,000
6121 Supplies and Other Expenses	8,068.30	9,000	5,000	400	5,400		3,000
6165 Pre-Sessions Expense	1,409.44	1,500	1,500	-	1,500		1,500
Total 6125 Program Expenses	\$ 45,233.45	56,000	49,000	(15,600)	\$ 33,400		\$ 23,000
6130 Committee Expenses - General	2,100.00	6,350	4,400	(3,150)	1,250		
6134 Childcare		2,000	2,000	(1,600)	400		
6137 Committee Day Expenses		0	0	-	0		
Total 6130 Committee Expenses - General	2,100.00	8,350	6,400	(4,750)	\$ 1,650		
6160 Program Support							
6163 Friends Camp	3,240.00	2,220	2,880	(2,880)	0		
6167 Religious Education & Outreach		0	0	-	0		
Total 6160 Program Support	\$ 3,240.00	2,220	2,880	(2,880)	\$ 0		
Total 6000 Programs	\$ 201,081.80	256,012	213,850	13,850	\$ 227,700		\$ 194,500
6140 Books & Other Sales Expense							
6142 Books	3,568.64	8,000	8,000	(4,400)	3,600		3,600
6145 Other Items for Sale		0	0	-	0		0
6147 Consignment Sales	3,175.11	0	0	3,400	3,400		3,400
Total 6140 Books & Other Sales Expense	\$ 6,743.75	8,000	8,000	(1,000)	\$ 7,000	5	\$ 7,000
Total 6200-6590 Support of Other Organizations	0	0	0	-	\$ 0		
6600 Publications							
6610 Yearly Meeting Minute Book		0		-	0		
6620 New England Friend (Sessions Issue)		0		-	0		
Total 6600 Publications	0	0		-			
Total Expenses	822,735	877,603	847,913	21,195	\$ 869,108		\$ 214,500
Net Operating Income	(62,198)	1,872	-1,018	1,395	377		31,000
Other Income							
9940 Other Income - Transfers from other funds	5,000						
Total Other Income	5,000						
Other Expenses							
9950 Other Expense - Transfer to other funds							
Total Other Expenses							
Net Other Income	5,000						
Net Income	(57,198)				377		

Notes:

1: **4010 Individual Contributions** estimated goal based on development consultant work: 5% growth FY25-FY26.

Growth rate FY22-FY24 has been 9.4% per year. FY15-FY19 was 13.7%; within that, FY16-19 was 17.6%. FY15-FY24 was 5.6%, and FY2008-FY2024 was 6.5%

2: **Sessions** 2026 budget is largely unknown. The last column breaks out "placeholder" Sessions numbers; the FY2026 Budget column still includes Sessions.

This budget is hypothetical, projecting the continuation of costs and income that we have seen in recent years.

In 2014-2019, the Sessions budget (which does not include staff time) had an average surplus of \$31,700 each year.

The model was that Sessions paid for part of the staff time needed to organize it, while unrestricted contributions covered the rest.

This FY26 Sessions budget model is still entirely hypothetical, but plans for a surplus of Sessions fees in line with pre-pandemic years.

3: **4020 Meeting contributions** for FY25 are projected at about \$350,200 (albeit including about \$5200 in one-time lawsuit contributions).

This FY26 budget is based on about a 5% increase from FY25 not counting lawsuit contributions.

4: **4050 Interest Income** based on bank account interest Q4 CY24 + Endowment interest Q4 CY24

5: **Bookstore** at Sessions adds about \$800 of profit based on 2024

6: **4080 Retreat Program Fee** income increased - based on successful surpluses for Living Faith & Discernment Discovery Day.

7. **Staff salary/wage** increase by cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) of 3%, rough average CPI for Boston metro 2024. Some mutually-agreed on reductions in wages or COLAs kept the increase lower than previous years. Recent previous COLAs have been: FY25 2.0%, FY24 6.1%, FY23 6.3%, FY22 0.5%, FY21 2.22%.

8. **5300 Travel**: Assumes management of travel expenses. 2026 is a Triennial year for FUM, usually meaning higher Reps Travel usage. YM can negotiate number of reps we fund.

9. **6107 Honoraria for Volunteer Leadership** reduced following the minute on laying it down: continue offering payments until terms of current appointees end at EOY FY26.

10. **Unallocated Income**: Propose an admin fee of 0.6% on our Pooled Funds investments. Admin fees are common for nonprofits; support accounting & associated programs.

Nominating Slate

For full descriptions of the committees, see <https://neym.org/committees>.

These nominations are from the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee. Please be in touch with the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee clerk, Jackie Stillwell (nomclerk@neym.org or 603-933-2608) or rising clerk Sadie Forsythe (nomclerk@neym.org or 215-360-1815) with questions or concerns.

American Friends Service Committee Corp. (4)

2026	2027	2028
Weaver, Hal (Well)	Eaton, Bob (Durh)	
	Woodrow, Peter (Port)	

Archives & Historical Records (6)

2026	2027	2028
Schmidt, Maxine (Nham)	Cazden, Betsy (Prov)	Grannell, Andy (Port)
2029	2030	
Barker, Mark (Con)		
Kohlhofer, Merrill (NSho)		

Board of Managers of Investments & Permanent Funds (10)

Ex-officio: Yearly Meeting Secretary, Treasurer, Finance Committee clerk

2026	2027	2028
Wernette, Tim (Win)	Eastman, David (Han)	
	Hackman, Mathew (Prov)	
	Ridgeway, John (Mt. Toby)	
2029	2030	
	Bennett, Doug (Durh)	

Clerks' Table

2026	2027	2028
Grace, Jesse (Bhil), Reading	Veatch, Phillip (Fpon), Presiding Clerk	Bickel, Sarah (Bhil), Reading
	Conley, Mark (Prov), Recording	Lightsom, Fran (Wfal), Recording
Bussiere-Nichols, Beth (Port), Interim Reading Clerk for 2025		

Faith & Practice (16)

Athearn, Marian (Wprt)	McCosker, Phebe* (Han)	
Bishop, Peter (Nham)	Neumann, Bruce (Fpon)	
Edmondson, Maggie (Wint)	Parkes, Alana (Bhil)	
Edwards, Eric (Wfal)	Reilly, Sue (Port)	
Godway, Eleanor (Hart)		
Hilles-Pilant, Carolyn (Bhil)		

Finance (10)*Ex-officio: Yearly Meeting Secretary, Accounts Manager, Yearly Meeting Treasurer*

2026

Corindia, Thomas (Han)
Keith, Doug (Hart)*

2027

Walker, Stefan (Nham)

2028

Belcher, Travis (Mon)

2029

2030

Mangelsdorf, Martha (Nbed)**Friends Camp Nominating (5) (3 named by NEYM Nominating, 2 named by Friends Camp Committee)***Ex-officio: Friends Camp Director*

2026

2027

Baker, Carol (Wrly)*

2028

Reuthe, John (Vass)**Friends Committee on National Legislation (6)**

2026

Drysdale, Scot (Han)
Telenar, Kaj (Wel)

2027

Fletcher, John (Wrly)
Smith, Sara (Conc)

2028

Grace, James (Port)**Friends General Conference Central Committee Representatives (8)**

2026

2027

Dakota, Barbara (West)
Farneth, Sally (Port)

2028

Potter, Kit (Fram)**Friends Peace Teams Project (3)**

Claggett-Borne, Minga (Camb)

Friends United Meeting 2023 Triennial Representatives (8, appointed to serve until the 2026 Triennial)Fogarty, Maggie (Dov)
Heath, Ruth (Conc)Walker, Stefan (Nham)
Weaver, Hal (Well)Weinholtz, Diane (Hart)
Weinholtz, Donn (Hart)**FUM General Board Representatives (3, appointed to attend 2023 Triennial and serve until the 2026 Triennial)**

Keefe-Perry, Kristina (Fpon)

Smith, Jennifer (Conc)

Friends World Committee for Consultation Representatives (5)*Ex-officio: Yearly Meeting Secretary*

2026

2027

2028

Goldberger, Judy (Bhil)**Legacy Gift Committee (9)***Ex-officio: Presiding Clerk, Permanent Board clerk*

2026

Candib, Lucy (Worc)

2027

Reixach, Karen (Keene)*
Vogel-Borne, Jonathan (Camb)

2027

Christopher, Megan (Well)**

Meeting Accompaniment Group (5 to 7; 5-year terms)*Ex-officio: Yearly Meeting Secretary, Presiding Clerk, M&C Clerk***2028**

Baker-Smith, Gretchen (Wprt)

Gant, Sarah (Bhil)*

McArthur, Hugh (Han)

Wilson, Morgan (Fram)

Woodrow, Honor (Putn)

2029

Stamm, Liesa (Hart)

2030**Ministry & Counsel Clerk****2028****Hough, Janet (Cob)****M&C Assistant Clerk****2026 (February)**

Williams, Carl (Pfld)

Ministry & Eldership Group, Thriving in (5 to 7)**2030****Monroe, Bill (Prov)**

Isbell Shin, Jennie (MTob)

Lyons, Jim (MTob)

2030**Drayton, Brian (Weare)****Nominating Committee, Yearly Meeting (15)****2026**

Gant, Christopher (Bhill)

Hansen, Beth (Wrly)**

Lamm, Thomas (Worc)

Schwope, Martha (Well)

2027

Manning, Leslie (Durh)

2028**Drayton, Darcy (Weare)**

Forsythe, Sadie (Putn)*

Nurturing Friends Education, Committee for (12) (6 nominated by Providence Mtg, NEYM; 6 nominated by Moses Brown)*Ex-officio: Presiding Clerk or Permanent Board clerk, Moses Brown Board clerk)***2026**

Smith, Megan (Prov)

Douthit, Zona (Prov)

2027

Bourns, David (Prov)*

2028**Monroe, Bill (Prov)****Hopkins Buller, Anna (Well)****Permanent Board (50)****2026**

Allen, Kimberly (Durh)

Davies, Susan (Vass)*

Hansen, Beth (Wrly)

Schwope, Martha (Well)

Zwirner, Mary (Bhill)

2027

Brenner, Tom (Worc)

Drayton, Darcy (Weare)

Isbell Shinn, Newell (Mt Toby)

Jordan, Carolyn Lamar (WFal)

Klepack, Meg (WSan)

Stamm, Liesa (Hart)

2028

Forsythe, Martin (Bhill)

Mair, Edward (Ames)

Randall, Allison (Keene)

Taber, Willa (Fpon)

Permanent Board (continued)

2029

Belcher, Travis (Mon)

2030

Lightsom, Fran (Wfal)

Forsythe, Carol (Putn)

McDonald, LouAnne (Hart)

Vaccaro, Palma (Hart)

*Wilson, Morgan (Fram)**Wooten, Kathleen (Lawr)***Puente de Amigos (9)**

2026

*McManamy, Em (Prov)**Schmidt, Macchi (Nham)*

2027

*Stone, Carolyn (Well)**

2028

*Lindo, Richard (Fram)****Quaker Earthcare Witness (1)**

Blanchard, Neil (Fram)

Theme and Speakers Team, Sessions (5; two-year terms)*Ex-officio: Sessions Clerk**

2026

Claggett-Borne, Minga (Camb)

Melix, Gail (Esan)

2027

Rein, Carol (Nshr)

Drayton, Brian (Weare)

Youth Ministries (6)*Ex-officio: Children & Family Ministries Coord., Teen Ministries & Outreach Coord., Program Director*

2026

Barletta, Newton (Fram)

Corindia, Nancy (Han)*

2027

Becce, Melissa (Hart)

Gray, Heather (Fram)

2028

Wooten, Maille (Lawr)