

To: The Permanent Board of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends
From: Phillip Veatch, Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting (Cambridge, MA), Clerk of Coordinating and Advisory Committee
Re: Report from C&A in preparation for the Permanent Board Meeting on February 28, 2026

1) Since the last Permanent Board meeting in December, the Coordinating and Advisory Committee has had its three day winter retreat. At the retreat we spent some time reflecting on the state of the world. Responses from C&A members included:

- One of our gifts as Friends is to help others see and trust the Living Presence.
- Sadness and hope are being experienced together leading to a strength in community.
- Small steps bring people in monthly meetings together.
- The challenge and frustration of not feeling one can break through with those on “the other side”.
- The recent Quaker Call to Action with 1000 people on Zoom featuring Phil Gulley. “From exhaustion to exuberance: Joy in the resistance to tyranny”. Joy in celebrating what is happening is needed especially when we are personally depleted exhausted. Such a hunger among Friends and people now. Hearing a hunger for visioning— what’s the prophetic vision of rebuilding?
- An opportunity to cultivate what we are for, not just what we are working against.

2) C&A has been working to clarify which committees require monthly meeting membership (and how to handle situations where membership status changes during a person’s term). While a few PPCs (Purpose, Procedure, and Compositions – the defining document for each committee) have an explicit requirement, others are vague. We will be bringing recommendations to Permanent Board in future meetings regarding changes to PPCs to clarify which committees require membership and which do not.

3) We reviewed the proposed PPC for the Conflict Resolution Team and generally endorsed the proposal that will be presented to Permanent Board by the group charged by Sessions to revise the charge originally brought to Sessions in 2024.

4) There is now a designated email address for Quarterly Meetings to send memorial minutes to: memorialmins@neym.org . Letters to this address go to the clerk of PB, the clerk of M&C, and the NEYM office manager.

When memorial minutes are received by NEYM, they will be shared with the clerk of M&C who will follow up with the meeting if needed regarding memorial minute guidelines. All the memorial minutes that Quarterly Meetings send to YM will go into the memorial minute booklet and excerpts from all of them will be read at the memorial meeting at Sessions.

Here is the link for guidance on writing a memorial minute:

<https://neym.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/Writing%20Memorial%20Minutes%20%282017%29.pdf>

5) We spent some time reflecting on questions raised by the Nominating Committee as they reviewed the PPC of the Permanent Board (which has not been updated since 2017). While C&A will leave most

of those questions up to the Nominating to bring to Permanent Board, one timely question is, “Does the current size of the PB feel small and would we wish to increase it by 10 or so members?” There are currently 31 members of PB (including the 9 ex officio members). Faith and Practice calls for the size of PB to be, “not more than fifty members, with each quarterly meeting represented.” If current members of PB have suggested names of additional PB members, please share them with Sadie Forsythe, the clerk of Nominating at nomclerk@neym.org or Lucy Meadows, Nominating shepherd for Permanent Board at lucymeadows@live.com.

We also reaffirmed the existing practice that clerks of committees are appointed by the Nominating Committee in consultation with members of each committee.

6) PB had asked C&A to make recommendations regarding how the yearly meeting should work on retrospective restorative justice for communities other than Indigenous communities. In spurring the Yearly Meeting to take up this work at this time, Hal Weaver offered both an important impetus, and through The Black Quaker Project, an important resource.

C&A’s recommendation is that the PB endorse the creation of a working group modeled after the NEYM Quaker Indigenous Boarding Schools Research Group with an overarching goal of **enabling meaningful reflection among Friends across NEYM in a way that positively impacts the choices we are making today.**

There is a historical part to this work that should consider the role (arc of involvement; actions) of New England Friends in chattel slavery and systemic racism. This includes the involvement of individual Friends and also any involvement of NEYM institutionally (as evidenced in our minutes, committee structures, and finances). A review of current and previous efforts towards reparations would be part of the group’s charge. We are looking for an overview, not something book length, with a goal of making the information accessible to New England Friends of different ages and backgrounds.

Without presuming that we (the yearly meeting) knows what is the best approach for retrospective restorative justice, the group would be charged with reaching out to affected communities to learn their understanding of what retrospective justice requires, and bringing possibilities for meaningful action back to the yearly meeting.

If the PB endorses this approach, C&A would draft a more complete PPC for PB’s consideration in May.