

Tuesday Morning

5.1 Epistle

We heard the epistle from Aotearoa-New Zealand.

“The climate emergency is a spiritual crisis for us and is exercising both our hearts and our minds. On the one hand we are concerned that in gathering and communicating locally, nationally, and internationally we enlarge our carbon footprint. On the other we wish to make our Quaker voice heard clearly and effectively at local, national and international decision-making forums.

“We drink from wells we did not dig. We warm ourselves at fires we did not kindle. (Deuteronomy 6:11) In doing so we have a responsibility to take on the role of kaitiaki (guardians) for resources and leave the world a better place for those that follow.”

5.2 Permanent Board

Sarah Gant (Beacon Hill), outgoing clerk of Permanent Board, gave her last Permanent Board report in that role.

At Sessions 2018, we approved the following minute:

“Permanent Board recommends laying down the Publications and Communications Committee, while directing Coordinating & Advisory and Permanent Board to consider how to better support publications in New England.

Publications and Communications had dwindled to one member: the clerk, Mark Barker (Concord). No other members were forthcoming. Currently the Moser Book and Tract fund is being managed by the Permanent Board until a new structure for supporting publications is approved.

Sessions is not in unity with laying down Publications and Communications. We ask Coordinating & Advisory and Permanent Board to discern how publication and the ministry of the written word could be more fully supported and to bring a proposal next year.”

This has been done; the report on this discernment is [to be inserted].

Friends approved this proposal for supporting publications.

5.22 As above, the Permanent Board took over management of the Mosher Book & Tract Fund until a new structure for supporting publications was discerned and approved. This has worked well. Of note, Permanent Board recently approved a disbursement from the Moser Book & Tract fund for the purposes of marketing the Spanish language edition of John Woolman’s Journal which was translated by Benigno Sanchez Eppler (Northampton) and Susan Furry (Northampton).

Coordinating & Advisory recommends that the Permanent Board retain this overall responsibility and oversight, delegating responsibility for proposal development and funding recommendations to the office manager and YM secretary. [The specific proposal will be appended]

Friends approved.

5.24 The body was then asked whether we were ready to lay down the Publications and Communications committee.

Friends approved.

5.26 In May 2018, Permanent Board approved a “funding priorities process” to guide Finance Committee’s budget discernment.

“In the current budgeting process, Finance Committee drafts a budget starting in January/February; brings the budget to the PB for comment in May; edits the budget; then brings the budget to Annual Sessions for approval in August. There is currently no formalized way to incorporate into the annual budget process the wide-ranging discernment ongoing in the broader YM.

“In the newly proposed funding priority process, the YM Secretary is asked to prayerfully integrate a wide range of ongoing consultation and discernment...into a formal set of annual funding priorities. This annual workflow would be shepherded by Coordinating & Advisory Committee, and the resultant proposed funding priorities would be brought to the November meeting of the Permanent Board.

“At that November meeting, PB would then further discern those proposed priorities. Based on that discernment, PB would give direction regarding financial

priorities for the coming fiscal year's budget to Finance Committee. ...The Finance Committee would receive this direction in advance of their January/February meeting, when the YM Secretary would present the first draft of the budget. In this way, Finance Committee could better incorporate the priorities and discernment of the wider YM into its ongoing budgeting process."

This is the first full year that this process has been followed. As mentioned earlier in the Finance Committee report, the Board discerned priorities of funding increased financial management capacity, expanding childcare at Sessions, improving communications, developing leadership practice & learning. Pursuant to our practice of transparency, PB lays before the body the fruits of this procedure.

Reflecting on her years as PB clerk, Sarah mentioned her deep gratitude for the prayers, love, and support of the "web of faithful friends" who have upheld her during times of grief and trial.

We accepted Sarah's report with immense gratitude for her years of joyful and faithful service. We were grateful, also, for the way a pattern of oppression was noticed during this report; was received with grace; and immediately altered.

For further detail, please see her written report, including the reports of three Permanent Board subcommittees: the Ad Hoc Working Group on Challenging White Supremacy, the Clerking Structures and Practices Working Group, and the Student Scholarship Granting Subcommittee. All of these reports are appended to the minutes, and separate minutes from these subcommittees are at [minute numbers to be inserted].

5.3 FGC Report

We heard the report from Frank and Jean Marie Barch, visitors from Friends General Conference (FGC), along with two of NEYM's appointed representatives to the FGC Central Committee, Eppchez Yes and Peter Nutting (Vassalboro).

We heard about FGC's financial difficulties over the past several years, the subsequent cuts to staff and programs, and the struggle towards financial sustainability. However, FGC is clear that their purpose is not primarily to balance their books, but rather to support the life of Friends. Despite hardship, this work has not ended. The current programmatic priorities for FGC include the FGC Gathering; the ministry on racism, including the Institutional Assessment on Racism; connecting constituent meetings; support of youth; and religious education, as carried out by the spiritual deepening program. We heard in

particular about FGC's Institutional Assessment on Racism, and the ways this might apply to NEYM's own work. Many working groups of FGC meet virtually in an effort to "steward resources of time, talent and carbon." Friends are invited to become more involved in the work of FGC.

A detailed written report on FGC's activities over the past 5 years [will be appended]. We accepted this report with gratitude for the many ways that FGC has touched our lives.

5.4 Jean Zaru

We heard a recorded video message from Jean Zaru (Ramallah Friends Meeting)