

Concord Quarterly Meeting for Business
22 January 2012

The meeting gathered at the meeting house of Wilmington Monthly Meeting and commenced at 8:30 a.m. with a period of silent worship.

Rich Ailes, acting as clerk, welcomed attenders and introduced Chel Avery, who was approved as recording clerk pro tem.

Rich read a letter (attached) from the quarter's clerk, Charles Spadoni, explaining the circumstances requiring his resignation from that role. There was a period of silent worship to hold Charlie in the Light. Rich expressed appreciation to Charlie for keeping himself, the assistant clerk, informed about the possibility of his incarceration and helping him to prepare in advance. A card is present for people to sign and Serita Spadoni, Charlie's sister, has agreed to forward it to him. The meeting approved accepting Charlie's resignation and putting his letter into the minutes.

Rich Ailes departed from the room while David Scott asked the meeting to approve Rich's appointment as clerk from this time through completion of the next full term, two and a half years from now, should Rich be willing. The meeting approved. Nominating committee will search for a new assistant clerk to begin as soon as possible.

The clerk reviewed the agenda, and the meeting approved.

Newcomers were welcomed. In a roll call of meetings, representatives from all member monthly meetings reported as present.

Beth Lawn reported for nominating committee, noting that David Scott is the committee's clerk. The committee hopes in April to bring forward nominations for assistant clerk and treasurer.

Ron Ploeg presented the 2011-12 budget (attached). We did not receive certain figures from PYM until well into the fall, which explains the late presentation of this budget, halfway through our fiscal year. Ron noted that new contributions to the tuition endowment fund, currently suspended for two years, are scheduled to be activated in the coming fiscal year. Currently we have a projected deficit of \$6,651 in the coordinator's budget. There are some discrepancies between our figures and those from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting that need clarification. It was news to some that PYM covered a shortfall in our coordinator expenses last year and is expected to cover the shortfall again this year.

Ron then presented our financial report as of December 31, 2011 (attached). This report shows a net surplus of nearly \$8,000, but this is a temporary cash flow situation due to covenant and tuition grant income received but not yet distributed. Once the tuition income is distributed, we will be in the red. We do have an excess in our operating fund, and the treasurer recommends applying \$500 of it to the coordinator fund. The meeting approved.

A concern was raised about whether we should forward part of our reserve of nearly \$4,000 to the yearly meeting in compensation for covering the shortfall in our coordinator expenses. This suggestion was forwarded to our planning committee for review, to bring back a recommendation in April.

The meeting approved a request by the treasurer that he send a general, overall statement to meetings with the covenants and receipts of all member meetings, to simplify the reminder process.

The proposed 2011-2012 budget was approved as amended above.

Rich Ailes advised the body that the **quarterly meeting video** is nearly completed. Following a minor correction, it will be posted for public availability. It is now available from links on the PYM and Concord Quarter website. The video was created by Audra Supplee of West Chester Meeting, with guidance from Rich Ailes and Charles Spadoni.

The clerk advised the meeting of **a request received from Concord Meeting member Brenda Beadenkopf for support to attend the Friends World Committee for Consultation World Conference**, to be held in Kenya in April 2012. Planning committee heartily supports Brenda's leading to attend, although the quarter had no funds to support Brenda's leading. It encourages individual contributions in a basket provided, with checks to be made out to Concord Quarterly Meeting and earmarked for Brenda. Brenda also requests prayer support.

David Scott reported on behalf of the ad hoc committee that was appointed to explore the implications of the loss of PYM funding for our coordinator program. In a longer report, published in our newsletter, the committee acknowledges the great value of the coordinator program to our quarter, but that we are unable to fund it as its current level. The committee proposes contracting with an individual to perform specific services at a set fee for 20 hours a week. This matter will receive further consideration in the program portion of this meeting. The ad hoc committee reports that its current work is completed, but planning committee will consider how to further season this matter to prepare for a decision at our April meeting. Friends approved

Beth Lawn offered quick updates to her coordinator's report, which appeared in the newsletter. The recent middle school sleepover event was successful, and the square dance is coming up. She suggests the formation of a youth committee. Our newsletter is about to go all-electronic, though anyone who really wants a paper copy can so request.

Tom Woodward presented the report for Goshen Monthly Meeting (attached).

David Scott presented the report for Wilmington Monthly Meeting (attached).

The meeting closed at 10 a.m. with a period of silent worship, leading into First Day worship with Wilmington Monthly Meeting.

Chel Avery, recording clerk pro tem

Rich Ailes, clerk

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December 4, 2011

Rich Ailes
Assistant Clerk
Concord Quarterly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends
310 Park Avenue
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania 19081

Re: Resignation as Clerk of Concord Quarterly Meeting

Dear Rich:

Regrettably, I have to inform you that I must resign as Clerk of Concord Quarterly Meeting effective today. More than eleven years ago, twelve charges were brought against me in federal court in Connecticut stemming from an alleged bribery incident that occurred at the investment firm where I was employed as a lawyer. I pled innocent as to all of those charges, and I have spent the last eleven years defending myself against them. So far eleven out of the twelve charges have been dismissed. Unfortunately, I am required to begin serving a two-year sentence beginning on December 14, 2011, with respect to the one charge that remains even though I have an appeal pending. If I prevail in my appeal, as I believe I will, I will be released sometime before the end of 2012.

I look forward to returning to Concord Quarterly Meeting as soon as this matter is resolved.

In the Light,
[signed by Charlie Spadoni]

**Concord Quarter
Ad-Hoc Coordinator Planning Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 20, 2011**

Present

Ray Hamilton, Gwynne Ormsby, Ron Ploeg, David Scott, Julie Senko, Charlie Spadoni, Larry Wheeler, Tom Woodward

Purpose

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss possible next steps after Beth Lawn, our current Concord Quarter Coordinator, retires at the end of this fiscal year (June 30, 2012). The minutes of this meeting will be presented at next Quarterly Meeting in January as a starting point to solicit input and feedback from Quarterly Meeting members and from Monthly Meetings.

Background

We reviewed the Concord Quarter Coordinator income and expense statement from PYM for last fiscal year ending June 30, 2011. Expenses totaled \$61,575 of which \$54,271 was for salary and benefits. Gifts of support from Monthly Meetings totaled \$32,041. The difference of \$29,534 was covered by last fiscal year by a combination of exhausting our remaining reserve (\$5,118) and a subsidy from PYM (\$24,416).

PYM is having facing serious financial challenges and has already warned that they are likely to be unable to continue subsidies for Quarterly Coordinators in the upcoming fiscal year. If we were to continue the existing arrangement with a new coordinator, assuming no increases in costs our combined Monthly Meetings would be faced with having to make up the difference of nearly \$30,000 per year to make up for the loss of reserves and the PYM subsidy.

Some if not all of our Monthly Meetings are currently under financial strain due to reduced contributions and reduced investment income. In addition, Wilmington Monthly Meeting is considering transfer to Western Quarter which would further deprive us of income to support the coordinator position (\$4,500 per year).

Under the circumstances, it seems unlikely that our Monthly Meetings could come up with an additional \$30,000 per year. Monthly meetings could reduce their covenants to PYM to raise additional money to fund the coordinator position but this would further exacerbate financial challenges at PYM.

Recommendations

1) We were in agreement that continuation of the role of a Quarter Coordinator is essential to the continued health and vitality of the Quarter but acknowledged that it seems impossible to continue the arrangement in its current form.

2) We discussed the need to change the position from paid employee with benefits to fixed price contract with defined roles and expected number of hours per year. The implied hourly rate would be above market rates (\$15-\$20 per hour) to make up for the loss of benefits. The following specific recommendations were made:

Characteristics of the Contract

- Year-to-year contract
- 1099 fixed price compensation of \$25,000 per year
- Expectation of 1,000 hours per year (20 hours per week for 50 weeks)

Candidate Qualifications

- Quaker
- Available to attend meetings on Sundays, some evenings, and some special events
- Excellent organizational and communication skills (may be asked to submit a writing sample)
- Ideally, the candidate would have a strong leading to do this work

Duties and Responsibilities (Prioritized)

1. Facilitate communication including writing and publishing the Quarterly newsletter
2. Provide administrative support for the Clerk
3. Serve as central contact person for the Quarter
4. Provide continuity for activity planning (send notifications and reminders, etc.)
5. Attend various Monthly Meetings in the Quarter on a regular basis
6. Proactively seek out and identify leadings within the Monthly Meetings, connect members from different Monthly Meetings who have similar leadings
7. Enable but do not drive programs
8. Coordinate events
9. If time allows, provide administrative support for smaller Monthly Meetings that are struggling

We also agreed that each prospective candidate may bring different unique skills and qualities and that therefore we should be open-minded and allow the job description to vary somewhat to take advantage of individual leadings and strengths.

3) We discussed sharing our plans with Western Quarter to see if there are any opportunities for synergies. This might include sharing one person to meet the needs of both Quarters, or sharing skills across Quarters, for example one person across both Quarters for administrative and communications work and a different person across both Quarters for youth or other program activity.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ron Ploeg, Convener

Post Meeting Notes

A few suggestions were made by participants after the meeting:

- We might want to adjust the compensation level to provide funds for printing and distributing hard-copies of the newsletter, assuming that we decide to continue. Estimated cost \$2,000 per year (to be verified)
- Consider whether the candidate must provide their own computer and word processing software, or if compensation might be reduced to allow us to purchase a computer and software.
- Conservative compensation in the first year leaves more room for increases in future years

Coordinator's Report to CQM
January 22, 2012

As you probably know, our **Concord Quarter YouTube video** is finished. Many thanks to Audra Supplee, our videographer par excellence, and Rich Ailes and Charlie Spadoni who worked with Audra to produce it. Audra also made a **YouTube video of the October hayride and the Youth Group Sleepover**, and is making another one of our December sleepover and ice skating party. You can go to the Concord Quarter website to view these and also pictures from our past events.

The **Youth Group's** winter holiday weekend at West Chester was successful, with 14 youth sleeping over in the West Chester meetinghouse. We had juggling lessons with the Give and Take Jugglers on Saturday morning, and enjoyed a surprise performance from a group of Chinese youth practicing for Chinese New Year. We have a **sleepover planned at the Westtown School cabin after the Square dance in February**, our last of the school year. We are working on two more one-day gatherings to finish the year, one in late April or early May, and the final one in conjunction with our tubing on the Brandywine. (date to be set soon). A **Youth Group Committee is being formed** to plan and oversee events for next year for the 5th-8th grade group and possibly a high school group. Please contact me if you would like to be part of it.

Our second annual **Square Dance** will be held Feb. 18 at Westtown School. We will have a larger room this year so please invite all your friends. We will need help in setting up the room; please contact me or Peter Lane if you can come a little early.

Our Annual Picnic and Tubing on the Brandywine will take place earlier this year, late June or early July. Attendance has been down and the water level very low the last few years when we have gone in late July. We are hoping both will be at higher levels with an earlier date for the outing. The date will be set soon.

The **Newsletter is going electronic**. Over the next several months I hope to convert most of our mailing list to e-mail and listserves for receipt of the newsletter. It costs over \$1.50 per newsletter to print and mail it, not counting staff time for folding, taping, labeling and stamping. When I started I was sending over 800 newsletters by snail mail; last issue that was down to 340. I would like to cut that figure in half by our next issue.

The Planning Committee and Ad Hoc Committee for the Coordinator Program have been hard at work on **issues around the Coordinator Program** sparked by potential changes in funding support from the Yearly Meeting and my pending retirement. I am working closely with these committees and the other quarterly meeting coordinators and Arthur Larrabee on issues around the changes in funding.

Beth Lawn

Goshen report to QM 1/22/12

As we reflect on the joys and challenges of the past year, we at Goshen are profoundly grateful for the depth of our corporate worship.

From that depth come other joys:

1. Our adult religious education program has settled into an exercise of writing questions, placing them in a hat, and selecting questions at random for group discussion. While we first thought of this exercise as useful for attenders and those new to Quakerism, all of us have found the discussions of great value for spiritual exploration and fellowship.
2. Our children's first day school serves our few children well.
3. We are grateful for new members and faithful attenders, and for our finding ways to welcome visitors to our fellowship.
4. We have had two one day retreats, the first centered on individual gifts and the other on the gifts of the meeting.
5. We have sent a questionnaire to members and attenders soliciting feedback on ways to create more opportunities for fellowship.
6. While we have few committees, those we have are effective.

As we celebrate our joys, we also recognize the challenges we have faced:

1. We are aware of our small size and resulting tightness of funds, but we manage to move forward.
2. We continue to be mindful of our well-meaning, potentially fruitful, but difficult relationship with the school associated with the meeting.

As we look forward, our hopes include:

1. Finding way to a new roof;
2. Being more proactive in attracting newcomers to our meeting and making ourselves known to the wider community;
3. Continuing to build an evolving relationship with the Friends school that shares our property.

Report from Wilmington Monthly Meeting to Concord Quarter

1/22/12

As a new practice, Meeting sets aside approximately 20 minutes of worship during Meeting for Business for "Leadings of the Spirit for the Life of the Meeting." This time allows for leadings to be raised in a worshipful, supportive, gentle but unstructured setting.

The Religious Education Committee has reinvigorated the program for our children. They have developed an exciting program and have created a number of intergenerational activities that have benefited young and old alike.

In recent years Worship & Ministry has provided several series of monthly adult education sessions held before meeting for worship. These were enthusiastically attended each time by up to twenty Friends. Meeting has appointed an ad hoc committee to continue this work. Current sessions are based on Leading from Within, which explores spirituality and leadership through poetry.

Meeting has just completed the first phase of our building renewal campaign. We reconfigured the Meeting Room to improve the entrance from the parking lot and to provide the Meeting Secretary with an office. Wiring and lighting are now up to code and we have a new furnace.

Wilmington Monthly Meeting continues to present its Harmony on the Hill program of concerts and host presentations on the Underground Railroad. We held well-attended all-day clerking workshop in October led by Arthur Larrabee. On 11/10/11 we sponsored an Interfaith Peace Service in commemoration of 9/11. Over 100 people representing at least ten different faiths filled the Meeting House for a unifying remembrance of those who died.

We face the on-going challenge of finding Friends who are willing to serve on the various committees needed to keep Meeting functioning. Many Friends serve on multiple committees, while too many decline to serve on any or on more than one committee.

Although the Meeting was able to meet its financial obligations, it continues to be a challenge to inspire all Friends to contribute generously.