

Concord Quarterly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Held at Willistown Monthly Meeting

July 21th, 2013

Meeting began with a period of silent worship. Rich Ailes welcomed everyone and thanked Willistown Meeting for hosting the Quarter. There were 30 Friends in attendance, with all 8 Monthly Meetings represented. The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Meeting approved David Scott (Wilmington) as the day's Recording Clerk.

Nominating Committee Report (David Scott)

David Leonard from Birmingham Monthly Meeting is nominated to be Recording Clerk. David has served as Recording Clerk at several monthly meetings over the past 46 years and spent the last 6 years among British Friends. He will be available to record starting with the October 2013 Quarterly Meeting. Meeting approved his nomination.

Minute of Appreciation for John Lavin's service as Recording Clerk

Friends record their appreciation for the service of John Lavin of Birmingham Monthly Meeting who has faithfully served as recording clerk for Concord Quarter since July of 2008. His timely and accurate minutes have been a blessing to the smooth functioning of this Quarter. We will hold him in the light as he moves into service as a recording clerk for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

Treasurer's Report (Bruce James, Westtown)

Bruce reported an analysis of the 2012/2013 fiscal year. The Coordinator covenants for the past year have exceeded the expenses. Meeting approved that the resulting surplus should be moved to the general reserve fund.

Meeting approved establishing a second account (about \$300) for coordinator expenses, with Bruce James, Rich Ailes, and Averyl Hall registered as signers on the account.

Meeting approved removing all previous account signatories on the primary business account and listing only Bruce James and Rich Ailes as the signatories.

Bruce presented the proposed 2013/2014 Budget:

- Monthly Meeting covenants remain unchanged
- Operating expenses are increased \$800 (total \$1600)
- Coordinator covenants remain unchanged
- Any budget surplus in the coming year would go to the Tuition Endowment Fund

Meeting approved the budget with this addition:

Any budget surplus over 10% in the coming year would go to the Tuition Endowment Fund and that future budget surplus policies be reviewed annually when new budgets are brought forward.

A copy of the budget is available by contacting Bruce.

Coordinator's Report (Averyl Hall)

Averyl has been discussing with Planning Committee and coordinators in other Quarters how to move forward with youth events. She has started a FaceBook page for the Quarter.

Deborah Fisch, Associate Secretary for Ministries for Friends General Conference, is able to be the presenter at a morning workshop on Quaker business practices to be hosted by Concord Quarter on March 22, 2014 at Concord Meeting. The Quarter will need to pay half of her travel expenses (about \$250).

Monthly Meeting Reports

Reports were heard from two Monthly Meetings (see attached):

- Report from Concord Monthly Meeting (Elizabeth Varley)
- Report from Willistown Monthly Meeting (Betsy Swan)

Report on Ministry travel in Great Britain/Sweden (Thomas Swain, Middletown)

Thomas spent 3 months abroad this spring to visit 14 Meetings to teach workshops on Spirit-given Gifts. Many were full weekend events. During the week he visited Friends and did historical research. His workshops touched on the following themes:

- How Gifts can be transforming for us, our community, and the World.
- How to identify Gifts: what we do well as individuals
- How we nurture those Gifts and develop them into ministry

His travel minute was endorsed by other Meetings.

Kindler's conference in England update (Rich Ailes)

At last Quarterly Meeting it was approved for Planning Committee to support a Young Adult Friend's participation in the Visioning New Fire with the Kindlers workshop at Woodbrooke from October 11 to 13 in Great Britain. This is a weekend conference working for Quaker renewal. The clerk reports that no progress has been made on finding participants for this event and would like some assistance to make this happen. The organizing group is currently holding 3 spots open for participants from PYM. Clerk asked for help in identifying an appropriate participant. Thomas Swain and Ed Dunlop volunteered to help Rich. Suggestions of people 20-40 years old who might be interested in participating should be sent to Rich within the next 2 weeks. Meeting approved the formation of this ad hoc committee.

Report from Hickman (Ellen Millick, Willistown)

A report on the Hickman was heard. Pamela Leland is the new Executive Director, replacing John Schwab who retired last year. Replacement of Sharpless Hall remains a priority for the Board. West Chester Monthly Meeting, the school, and the Hickman have a liaison committee that meets regularly. Upcoming events are the blueberry festival and the Art of Caring (in the fall).

List Serve (Rich Ailes)

Clerk asked if the Quarter could set up a list serve to improve email communications. Meeting decided to hold this decision over until the next Quarterly Meeting at Westtown.

Rich Ailes, Clerk

David Scott, Recording Clerk Pro Tem

Report of Willistown Monthly Meeting
Concord Quarterly Meeting, July 2013

Over the past 12 months, Willistown Meeting has focused on 4 areas of work and growth: maintaining a rich spiritual practice, continuing the daily care of our community and facility, creating structures which support the business life of the Meeting, and undertaking a major renovation project. Each of these has presented joys and challenges to the Meeting.

The membership of Willistown remains stable at just under 200 people, 14% of whom are under 21. We have an active community of attenders as well. Though several dear members of Meeting have died over the past year, and some are no longer able to attend regularly, we have an influx of young families keeping the Meeting vital.

Key to our strength as a Meeting is our First Day School program. Run by a very dedicated group of committee members, we have been extraordinarily lucky to have a Religious Education Coordinator as a paid position at the Meeting. Though we had difficulty filling this position when it was vacant, we have had 2 talented teachers in this role over the past years and a few talented, dedicated Meeting members who have stepped in when the position has been vacant. (And we are hiring again now, if you know of anyone who might be interested!) Over the course of this year, the First Day School Committee and the Buildings &

Grounds Committee worked together to design several intergenerational projects, including a bird and bat house building workshop which brought the community together joyfully.

The active membership at Willistown, like many Meetings, is divided between families with young children and Friends whose children are grown and independent. There are fewer active members between ages 40 and 65 than in these other age groups. As a result, we are, in addition to tending to the spirit of our youngest attenders, beginning to consider how we can support local members who find it difficult to get to Meeting on a regular basis.

The Peace and Social Action Committee and the Kirk Plumsock Trust Committee have been most active in helping us live our Quaker values outside of the Meeting. We have cooked and served a regular mid-day meal for Safe Harbor shelter in West Chester on Sundays and contributed monthly to the West Chester Food Cupboard. The Kirk-Plumsock Trust Committee has served the broader Quaker and West Chester area communities with grants on a semi-annual basis.

Our property committees have worked assiduously to maintain the meetinghouse, outbuildings and surrounding grounds. After several years of delayed upkeep, this has been an all-consuming task, and we feel lucky to have the financial wherewithal to accomplish a host of projects.

The committee structure of the Meeting has been a focus of discussion for the committee clerks, who have begun to meet on a periodic basis to coordinate our work and support one another in our roles at the Meeting. Following the example set by other meetings in the Quarter, we have tried to streamline our committees this year. Our first steps have been to combine the House, Buildings & Grounds, and Cemetery committees into one Property Committee and to lay down the Library Committee. These changes were offset by the creation of a Communications and Outreach Committee (last year), which combined the production of our newsletter with oversight of the Meeting's website, and the creation (2 years ago) of a Development Committee, whose primary focus has been to attend to member contributions, though now includes the capital campaign for our handicapped access addition. We have found it difficult to populate our committees with members and attenders who have time and commitment to be actively involved in the business of the Meeting, and will continue to evaluate our committee structure to be sure it meets the needs of the Meeting.

To support committees in accomplishing the work of the Meeting, we have undertaken several projects. Two years ago we began the process of putting in writing the policies and processes followed by the most active committees: the Tuition Assistance Committee, the Burial Grounds Administration Committee, and others. We are slowly compiling a reference guide which will help younger members of the Meeting (me included) as we transition into leadership roles. We have been lucky enough to hire a bookkeeper who will also provide some secretarial help to the Meeting – a move many of us find very exciting. And, thanks to a grant through the Chester County Community Fund, we were able to have Arthur Larrabee lead a one-day clerking workshop for our members and some Friends from Concord Quarter.

With all of this work, we are trying both to tend to the current needs of our community and look toward the future. Perhaps our most hopeful act as a Meeting has been to begin building an addition to the meetinghouse, which will provide handicapped access to all three levels – classrooms, Meeting room, and social room. The desire to have handicapped access at Willistown is decades old, and it has been actively pursued for much of that time. It has been a remarkable experience of Quaker process which has, over the course of the last 19 months, brought it to fruition. We celebrated the groundbreaking last Sunday and with that embark on a new year at Willistown Meeting.

Joys and Challenges of Concord Meeting, July 2013

Due to lack of enrollment we had to close down our Nursery School. We are having ongoing conversations about how to restart the Nursery School in a more sensible and businesslike manner.

We are in the process of cleaning out and reevaluating how to best use our large underutilized Meeting house space and grounds. Historically Concord was the centrally located Quarterly Meeting gathering place. We would like to offer the Quarter more use of Concord Meeting as a place to gather. We would like to host Quarter activities and committee meetings, and we have offered the use of some space for the Quarter Coordinator office, in one of our classrooms or our Saddle House that was once home to the Friends Suburban Project. One use for our space is that we are hosting a PYM Middle School Gathering for a weekend in December 6-8, 2013.

Parochial institutions in Delaware County are now able to utilize Delaware County Community Service Workers who work off their non-violent crimes in community service. We have had them for two weekends so far. We supervise 8 workers for 2 full days over the weekend, and our members have been wonderful about volunteering their time for this ongoing project. Concord Meeting is responsible for the old Meetinghouse in Chichester. The workers have helped our caretaker with much needed projects there: clearing neglected land; painting Meeting House woodwork; cleaning up storm damage; hauling brush; and fixing the cemetery wall. They made a huge pile of chips, and are working on making a path around the perimeter of the property. It is a fine example of community outreach and inreach, and it demonstrates the Meeting's willingness to work with the local corrections system. The County is always looking for places to utilize Community Service workers.

Concord Meeting is in the challenging process of paring down the membership list to one that is realistic and reflective of our actual Meeting Members. We hope to re-vitalize our meeting. Any and all help on that front gratefully accepted.

Our commitment to the Quarter and PYM remains firm.

Valerie Peery, Clerk of Concord Meeting