

Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting
Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business
November 11, 2018 Minutes

The meeting opened at 11:50 am with silent worship. Ralph Murphy clerked the meeting. 42 Friends were present. Phyllis Malandra gave the response of Loaves and Fishes Committee to the Advices and Queries on The Meeting Community. Friends offered their responses out of the silence. One Friend, noting that the committee grappled with the issue of inclusion, said he has been announcing his preferred pronouns during introductions at rise of meeting. He recognizes those in the meeting who do not identify as gender binary and wants everyone to feel included regardless of gender identity.

The Clerk introduced Nancy Wilkinson, who is substituting as Assistant Clerk for today's business meeting.

The Recording Clerk read the minutes for the October 14, 2018 Meeting for Business. The minutes were approved with no corrections.

Correspondence and Clerk's Business

The Berkeley Food Pantry is asking for volunteers. Interested Friends may speak to Tom Yamaguchi.

The Clerk announced that in the next few months, the meeting will be drafting its State of the Meeting Report. Members of the writing committee will consist of one member of the Care of the Meeting Committee, one member of Worship and Ministry Committee, and one member or attender selected from the meeting at large. He asked that members of those two committees speak to their clerks about joining the writing committee. Others may speak with the clerk about becoming the third member.

Old Business

Proposed Revisions to Faith and Practice (Worship and Ministry Committee Elizabeth Strain, and the Ad Hoc Committee on the Revisions to the Section on Reaching Out, Leonard Joy)

The Clerk reminded us of the December 1 deadline for responding to the Faith and Practice Revision Committee. If we do not reach unity at this meeting, he said, we can still send the committee the reports we have already approved. He reminded us that we are not approving language at this meeting, only making suggestions to the Revision Committee.

Elizabeth Strain presented the report for Worship and Ministry Committee which is attached. The revised report addresses the issue of defining the terms elder and eldery. "We talked about the difference between our understanding of "Elder," which seems to be someone who would be looked to as a figure of authority, and of "Weighty Friend," which connotes someone who might have weight/knowledge/wisdom in one area but possibly not another."

"The section on Leadings should be clearer that the establishment of elders and eldery is not intended to reestablish all the old practices and responsibilities of the historical position of elders."

The meeting approved the updated report.

Leonard Joy reported for the ad hoc committee responding to the proposed revisions to the advices and queries on Reaching Out. That report is attached.

The ad hoc committee suggests adding advices and queries directly related to the testimony of equality, as well as addressing the use of “we.” They suggest using the word “practices” instead of “faith”, which may be construed to mean “creed.” They suggest substituting a quote from George Fox, as the Lloyd Lee Wilson quote is “without sufficient context to be useful in relating to the advices.”

Concerns were raised regarding the use of the word “race” which is not biologically correct. Others argued that the word addresses cultural reality. After discussion, we agreed to place the word “race” in quotation marks.

Some Friends did not understand what the committee meant by acculturation. That sentence was revised to “This calls for each meeting to find opportunities to understand and strengthen practice within the meeting.”

The following query is being added to the report. “Are our meeting places and houses accessible?”

The meeting approved the report with those changes. The clerk will forward the approved reports to the Faith and Practice Revision Committee.

New Business

Nominations to the Nominating Committee (Naming Committee, Nancy Wilkinson)

The following Friends are being nominated to the Nominating Committee. Charles Blanchard (clerk), Patricia Dienstfry, Nancy Wolf Jackson, and Margaret Schneider are currently on the committee. New members nominated are Kat Stenstedt, Laura Boles, Dusty Sykes, and Tom Rothschild. Those nominations will season for one month.

Minute on Terms for Positions in the Meeting (Naming Committee, Nancy Wilkinson)

Naming Committee drafted a minute to increase the terms of committee service from one year to two. That minute is attached. It has been an informal practice to ask Friends to make a two year commitment of committee service. Naming Committee is concerned about the work load of Nominating in contacting everyone in the meeting for committee service.

Charles Blanchard, clerk of Nominating Committee, expressed concerns that the change could make the work of Nominating more difficult. Friends have balked at being asked for a one year commitment and said they would be available for shorter periods of time. In addition, what if a person is not working out on a committee? It would be easier to remove that person after only one year.

On the second concern, another Friend said that the yearly meeting terms are for three years. This is a problem when a person is not working out on a committee and refuses to leave.

Amy Dewey, clerk of Communications, said she was asked to commit to three years on that committee. She is currently on her third year.

Treasurer Richard Leath asked if Naming would consider term limits. He has served as treasurer for eight years.

The minute will season for one month. Those with questions and concerns may speak to Nancy Wilkinson.

Librarian Nomination (Nominating, Charles Blanchard)

Raven Moon is being nominated as the meeting librarian. That nomination will season for one month.

During the selection process, Nominating Committee has discovered that the Communications Committee job description does not include the position of Librarian, even though an updated job description was approved at the business meeting a number of years ago. That job description appears to have become lost. Communications and Nominating committees will attempt to locate it and update the meeting web site.

2019 Budget (Finance Committee, Richard Leath)

Treasurer Richard Leath introduced the proposed 2019 budget. The Quaker Events Support Fund is being reduced by \$500. A new category, Special Activities, has been created to fund irregular expenses. There has been an increase in the PYM assessment to \$122 per member. Richard noted that assessment is based on the number of meeting members, including those who have not been active in the meeting for a long time.

Reports

Treasurer (Richard Leath)

The treasurer provided the report for January to October 2018. It shows a \$26,091.92, which the worst he's ever seen. Finance Committee will be making weekly announcements to encourage donations. A Friend asked if we can create an easy method to make electronic donations. A number of Friends have authorized their banks to send checks automatically. Each bank has its own procedures and may charge for the service. A decision would have to be made by Finance Committee.

Peace, Earthcare, and Social Witness Committee (Susan Black)

The committee will be bringing a minute to next month's business meeting.

At the suggestion of the Clerk, the committee will be conducting a survey of members starting next week on their individual leadings and what types of organizations they support.

At the next committee meeting, Charles Blanchard will be speaking on his personal leadings. Strawberry Creek meeting is sponsoring a talk by George Lakey on social change strategies. It will be held at Berkeley Meetinghouse on November 30 at 7:15 pm.

Strawberry Creek will be joining Berkeley Friends Meeting and Berkeley Friends Church on January 20 to raise bond money for people detained by ICE. The fundraiser will be held at Berkeley Friends Church.

A representative from FCL CA will be coming to Strawberry Creek on March 3.

A threshing meeting on the Dime-A-Gallon Fund that was scheduled for November 18 is being postponed. In its place, there will be a meeting to provide the American Friends Service Committee with input on its strategic plan for the next year.

Worship and Ministry Committee (Elizabeth Strain)

Worship and Ministry Committee is considering a practice of closing the door during the last 15 minutes of the meeting for worship. This is in addition to the current practice of closing the door at 10:00 a.m. to allow a second entrance at 10:15 a.m. Those arriving after 10:45 a.m. would have to wait until after the time when everyone says their names. Worship and Ministry is also considering having the Greeter wait outside after 10:15 a.m. and bring late arrivals in as small groups. The committee may start testing the practice in December.

Friends expressed concern for forcing people to wait outside during the winter when the weather is cold and rainy. Friends also expressed concern for the Greeter who would be prevented from joining the meeting for worship for much of the hour.

One Friend asked if people could be allowed to enter the meeting room at any time, as long as no one is giving vocal ministry. Another Friend suggested that seats by the door be reserved for latecomers.

Friends with concerns and questions may speak to Elizabeth Strain.

Communications Committee (Amy Dewey)

Communications Clerk Amy Dewey reported the committee lost half of its members in September, including the Library when Clifford Ham moved to the East Coast.

The newsletter deadline moved up one week to the third Sunday of the month. The newsletter is distributed on the fourth week of the month.

The committee is in the process of moving the meeting's web group from Yahoo to Google. The committee is investigating whether Friends will need a Google account to participate in the group.

Improvements continue to be made on the meeting's web site.

College Park Quarterly Meeting Representative (Tom Yamaguchi)

CPQM Representative Tom Yamaguchi reported on the fall quarterly session at Sierra Friends Center. His report is attached. One plenary was dedicated to an examination of the issues and challenges far-flung Friends in our Quarter face as we hold our gatherings. CPQM has been considering replacing future Winter sessions with smaller, regional gatherings. The 2019 winter quarter session will be on Saturday, January 19, 2019 in Santa Rosa. The speaker will be the author J. Brent Bill whose most recent book is "Life Lessons from a Bad Quaker."

Fall Retreat- Shelley Tanenbaum

About 30 to 35 people attended yesterday's fall retreat held at the Redwood Gardens Community Room. Friends expressed appreciation for the event that Shelley described as a mix of worship sharing and AVP Light and Livelies. Friends were asked "What do you appreciate about Strawberry Creek in one sentence?" A common response was the meeting is a sanctuary, a place to go deep, and yet a place where Friends are challenged and empowered.

Announcements

The next Meeting for Business will be held December 9, 2018 at 11:50 a.m. at Berkeley Technology Academy.

The Twelfth Month Gathering will be at Albany Community Center, December 8, 5:00 p.m. Quaker Heritage Day at Berkeley Friends Church will be on Saturday, February 23. Jon Kershner, PhD will be presenting "The Prophetic Voice of John Woolman."

Susan Burr of the Power, Privilege, and Race Working Group invited Friends to attend the Wednesday evening showing of the film "The Hate U Give," followed by a discussion at a nearby café.

Avotcja Jiltonilro asked for donations of money and toys for Puerto Rico during the Season of Giving. She invited Friends to attend the play "No, Not My Son" at Berkeley Black Rep this afternoon. The play was written by one of her students. Admission for veterans is free.

The meeting closed with silent worship at 1:53 pm.

Submitted by: Ralph Murphy, Clerk, Nancy Wilkinson, Acting Alternate Clerk, and Tom Yamaguchi, Recording Clerk.