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Minutes of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Representative Meeting April 5, 2014 Red Cedar Friends Meeting, Lansing, Michigan

14 RM4.1 Worship and Epistle from Pacific Yearly Meeting

The Meeting opened with silent worship at 1:30.

An Epistle from the Pacific Yearly Meeting Annual Meeting, Seventh Month, 2013 was shared. This is a powerful epistle, which explored the way Quakers relate to the world and why we are here, paying particular regard to those without power.

14 RM4.2 Roll Call

Akron	1	Kalamazoo	3
Ann Arbor	6	Kent	0
Athens	2	Mid-Ohio Valley	0
Birmingham	0	North Columbus	2
Broadmead	10	Oberlin	0
Cleveland	1	Pine River	0
Delaware	0	Pittsburgh	2
Detroit	6	Red Cedar	3
Grand Rapids	2	Waysmeet Worship Group	1
Granville	1	Wooster	3
Holland	0		

Total 43

14 RM4.3 Clerk's Report

Sally Weaver Sommer (Broadmead) reported.

Sally greeted everyone and presented the agenda for the meeting. She brought forward Seth Reichenbach (North Columbus) and Joyce Balderston (Wooster) to be appointed to the Naming Committee. They were approved.

14 RM4.4 Executive Committee Report

Sally Weaver Sommer (Broadmead) reported for the committee.

Sally reported that the Executive Committee had met Fourth Month 4, with the main issues considered being the proposed summer Work Camp Project in Detroit, the High School Retreat Program, and changes in the Spiritual Formation Program for the coming year. The Executive Committee approved the proposal to hold a 2014 summer work camp in Detroit.

14 RM4.5 Ad Hoc Committee on Service Projects Report

Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor) reported for the committee.

At our annual sessions in 2012, yearly meeting agreed that we felt led to find a way to provide service project opportunities, particularly noting the great needs being felt by our neighbors in Detroit.

Last year we held a work camp in Lima, OH that proved to be a successful opportunity for 17 Friends to help in a Habitat store and a soup kitchen. At the yearly meeting sessions we determined, through a poll, that Friends would like to have a similar experience this year in the challenging setting of Detroit. We are now

proposing to explore the world of social, environmental and economic justice in the Cass Corridor of Detroit for four days preceding Annual Sessions 2014. We will be able to partner with Cass Community Social Services (CCSS) in their program to help meet the needs of folks who are seeking jobs, security, training, and family stability. Most of the clients start out living rough, but some now have apartments on-site.

CCSS was formed in 2002 by the Methodist Church and now has a “campus” of 6 buildings on Woodrow Wilson Blvd., immediately northwest of center city Detroit. It has expanded to a \$6 million per year operation, supported by many churches and organizations, serving over one million meals per year to the homeless and hungry, and employing 145 folks in the training and care programs. Thousands of volunteers each year work in a wide variety of programs, and we’ve learned that our group might clear vacant lots, sand and paint walls, help serve meals, sort and pack recycled paper, recover discarded tires (for conversion to doormats and flip-flops), and work in the on-site vegetable garden.

CCSS would be able to house us in two buildings, Mom’s Place I with 3 large dorm-like rooms (total capacity @ 20), and a local church with sleeping mats on the floor. We would bring our own bedding and work clothes. They would provide us with 3 meals a day and specific, supervised jobs. The cost will be \$20 per day per person, plus a donation of \$50 for the entire group. CCSS is able to provide secure parking for our cars and take us on an exploration of some of the highlights and lowlights of Detroit if we request it. They also are eager to partner with us in evening programs, but provide space for our group to hold its own gatherings with worship and discussion when we feel the need for a time of reflection.

We are proposing gathering at the CCSS Scott Building for an orientation on Sunday, July 20 in the afternoon. We would settle into our dorm, have supper together and meet the staff, share worship and conversation in the evening, then do our physical work from Monday through Wednesday, driving down to Bluffton on Thursday in time for committee meetings and the beginning of Annual Sessions.

We have heard from the High School Teen Retreat Program Committee that they are interested in being part of this project as their summer retreat. A straw poll of people who participated in the one day service project in Lima last year showed that at least 9 people from that group would be tentatively able to do this work in Detroit in 2014. Their enthusiasm for this longer, three day, four night, experience was heartening, with one person speaking of his hope that this experience in learning and working together would carry additional energy over into our annual sessions.

Finally, last year in discussing service and work projects in general, we were asked to provide a statement of intention so we would share more clarity in why we want to do this and what we hope will come of it. Our intention for this year is this:

The intent of the Lake Erie Yearly Meeting service project in 2014 is to provide an experiential opportunity to live this year’s theme of “Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges.” We recognize the barriers between classes in our society, and believe that a project that allows us to meet people who are in need will help us learn how to build bridges across those barriers. By joining the ranks of volunteers affiliated with the Cass Community Social Services, our small gift of a few days work will become part of a large mosaic of their ongoing service in that community. We also expect this project to provide a time for community building and spiritual reflection for the participants.

14 RM4.6 High School Teen Retreat Program Report

Merry Stanford (Red Cedar) reported for the committee.

Merry reported that three of four retreats have been completed so far this program year. She then outlined future 2014-2015 retreats. The committee is beginning the process of finding a new coordinator for when Robb Yurisko (North Columbus) steps down from his position as leader. Merry then presented a concern that there is dwindling participation in the teen retreats. She spoke and sang earnestly to members to hold the teens in their monthly meetings in the Light and encourage them to participate in the program. The conflict between teens’ busy lives and the High School Retreat Program, as well as the Annual Sessions, needs to be resolved by parents in a respectful manner. Perhaps teens should be encouraged to bring a friend along to retreats, which would help tie the experience into a teen’s life outside of meeting. The committee members are available to visit meetings in order to help strengthen the relationship between the meetings’ teens and the High School Teen Retreat Program.

14 RM4.7 Treasurer's Interim Report

Mike Hinshaw (Wooster) reported.

Mike reported that he has received donations from all but two meetings for this fiscal year (Seventh Month 1-Sixth Month 30). Income to date totals almost \$27,000. \$938.30, or 19%, of the \$5,000 travel budget has been spent to this point. He noted that the Yearly Meeting has donated \$4,500 to Friends School in Detroit and will soon contribute \$4,500 to FGC. Mike continues to set aside funds to help defray FWCC travel expenses, which peak approximately every three years. Expenses to date have totaled approximately \$18,000 in an annual budget of \$31,000. The General Fund Balance was given as \$26,395, with overall assets being \$53,963.

14 RM4.8 Finance & Budget Reports

Jeff Cooper reported for the Committee.

1. Draft budget for 2014-15. We are presenting this afternoon a draft budget for 2014-15, with an invitation for comments and questions now and anytime until shortly before Annual Meeting, when we must approve a final budget. Using our current budget as a starting point, we propose the following changes:

- a. Decrease the travel budget by \$1000 (to \$4000). More on that below.
- b. Decrease the Publications & Archives budget by \$200 (to \$3000).
- c. Decrease the Records Project (our contribution to the Friends Historical Library) by \$100, returning to the usual level of \$100.
- d. Decrease support for the Scholarship Fund for Ministry by \$500 (to \$500). The \$1000 budgeted this year was unspent and thus is transferred to the fund. Combining that \$1000 with \$500 in next year's budget makes \$1500 available for scholarships next year.

Next we have a number of increases. Please bear in mind that these reflect requests from Executive Committee or individual committees of the Yearly Meeting.

- e. Increase the High School Teen Retreat Program Fund by \$1000 to \$7000 to cover the costs of transportation for those teens needing financial assistance (often provided by reimbursing the transportation costs of drivers and/or Friendly Adult Presences).
- f. Increase the Spiritual Formation budget line by \$1400 to \$1500. We have intentionally under-budgeted this line for the past few years because the fund it supports had become so large. The fund has now dwindled to \$1457, so it is time to resume support. In addition, the Spiritual Formation group has requested an increase to support bringing in outside speakers.
- g. Add a line to support the costs of the summer service projects at \$2000.

These changes bring us to a total of \$33,740, up \$2600 from last year. Our membership numbers appear to be about the same. The suggested contribution per member rises to \$45, and still results in a budget with a slight deficit: \$865, nearly \$1000 less than last year. We can of course make adjustments between now and Annual Meeting, seeing where finances stand at the end of the current year and what comments we hear from Friends in the Yearly Meeting.

- h. The draft budget is attached.

2. New Funds

- a. **Proposal to Create a Travel Fund.** Finance Committee proposes the creation of a Travel Fund. Currently we have a budget line for Travel, but no fund. If you look at the figures for the past several years in the draft budget, you can see that travel expenses are difficult to predict. It appears that we'll spend well under the budgeted \$5000 for the current year. If we had a Travel Fund, we could take, for example, \$2000 in unspent travel money for this year and place it in the fund, thereby providing a cushion that would allow us to budget less next year. Continuing the example, we could budget \$4000 rather than \$5000, but have \$6000 available for travel, should it be needed.

We currently expect to have a sufficient balance in the General Fund at the end of the fiscal year to transfer \$2000 to a Travel Fund.

The proposal to create a Travel Fund is presented now to allow Friends time for seasoning. We expect to bring it to Annual Meeting for a decision.

- b. **Proposal to Create a Temporary Fund with no balance to facilitate cash flow for this summer's work project.** This would enable us to accept donations earmarked for this project, and possibly offer scholarships with any funds that are contributed. The ad hoc committee overseeing this project will manage the money within this fund. The \$50 required donation to Cass Community Social Services will come from the Clerk's Fund.
- c. **Proposal to Create a Budget Line and Supporting Fund for summer work projects on a lasting basis.** This is for seasoning and a decision at Annual Meeting. The draft budget includes \$2000 in this proposed budget line.
3. **Covering the cost of Annual Meeting.** The Annual Meeting is intended to be self-supporting, and thus is not part of the budget; income and revenue go into and out of the Annual Meeting fund, which provides a cushion. Last year at this time, the fund had dwindled from over \$6000 down to \$371, and we made some adjustments to stem the decline. These seem to have worked. The amount in the fund has rebounded to \$1473; this increase of \$1102 is mainly attributable to the \$1011 received in donations for Annual Meeting. Thus our revenue apart from the donations was extremely close to actual expenses – a difference of just \$91. And we thank all Friends who made donations, allowing the fund to recover.

Based on last year's activity, we recommend keeping registration fees and scholarships at the same level:

- The registration fee is \$50 for early bird, \$60 for later.
- Youth and children are charged only 1/3 the cost of meals and lodgings; registration is free.
- First-time attenders pay 2/3 of standard costs (a 1/3 discount).

Moreover, we ask Arrangements and Site Committee to include again on the Registration Form a line inviting donations to help enable youth and children to attend Annual Meeting.

4. **Friends Fiduciary Accounts.** We currently have over \$25,000 invested in two accounts in Friends Fiduciary Corporation's Consolidated Fund. These have a standard annual payout rate of 4.5%, though we've recently been informed this will drop to 4.0% by 2017.

Recently, Friends Fiduciary Corporation has developed a new investment opportunity called the Quaker Green Fund, which is "fossil fuel free," and is specifically designed for Friends meetings, churches, and organizations. The Quaker Green Fund includes a component dedicated to "cleantech" – investments in nine positive environmental areas, including advancements in sustainable use of agricultural resources, alternative and renewable energy, efficient transport, energy conservation, water conservation and filtration, low carbon finance, and cutting-edge clean technologies. It includes a mix of stocks and bonds and is intended for investors with a greater than five year investment horizon. Its current standard payout rate is 3.5%. Finance Committee is recommending moving our investments into this, but won't do so immediately and welcome Friends' leadings on this matter. You can read more about it at www.friendsfiduciary.org/quaker-green-fund/.

5. **LEYM Financial Manual.** We have revised the *LEYM Financial Manual*. This is intended mainly for members of Finance Committee, but we shall post it on the website, where anyone can consult it. We hope to keep it continuously updated – so if in July we agree to create a Travel Fund, this will be added to the *Manual*.

Representative meeting **approved** the creation of the temporary fund described in 2b above.

14 RM4.9 Spiritual Formation Committee Report

Mathilda Navias (Broadmead) reported for the program.

The committee was asked to prepare a presentation explaining its purpose and program at the Annual Sessions.

14 RM4.10 Nominating Committee Report

Thomas Taylor (Ann Arbor) reported for the committee.

The committee is seeking to fill positions on the Peace, Earthcare, Site and Arrangement (including a registrar) committees. It also is seeking individuals to represent the YM at the FCNL, to run the High School Program at the Annual Sessions, and to become the YM's Recording Clerk. All positions are to commence at the rise of this year's Annual Sessions.

The committee raised the question of how to best structure recording the discussions and decisions at our Annual Sessions and other meetings. Should the yearly meeting take minutes with, or without, the reading back of minutes at the time of discussion? Friends shared deeply over the issue.

14 RM4.11 Yearly Meeting Planning Committee Report

Janet Dando (Akron) reported on the planning for the adult program. An alternative dinner is being planned for Thursday evening. This will be free of charge, although participants are asked to bring a dish to share. Dietary considerations will be sent out in advance of the Annual Sessions. She then outlined the workshops being planned for the Annual Sessions. Worship sharing will be structured a little bit differently than in the past. Attenders will be able to sign up for worship sharing opportunities when they sign on arriving in Bluffton.

Dale Pratt-Harrington (Athens) reported on the talent show plans and guidelines. The committee asked for people to let it know of interest in participating in the show as soon as possible, preferable before the start of the Annual Sessions.

Conleth Crotser (Cleveland) reported on the programming for Youth and Children. There is a need for volunteers.

14 RM4.12 Arrangements and Site Committee Report

Jon Sommer (Broadmead) reported for the committee and announced the location and date of the Annual Sessions to be Bluffton, Ohio, from Seventh Month 26th till the 30th.

14 RM4.13 Advancement & Outreach Committee Report

Dolores Avner (Pittsburgh) reported for the committee.

Becky Morehouse will be working on updating the map outlining LEYM boundaries and which will show its monthly meetings and worship groups. She hopes to have the map ready in time for the Annual Sessions and would welcome any input.

Merry Stanford (Red Cedar) has completed five visits since the last Annual Sessions in her ministry to travel amongst the meetings in the Yearly Meeting.

The committee has agreed to collaborate with the High School Teen Retreat Committee in attempting to reach out to that segment of the Yearly Meeting by encouraging and underwriting Robb Yurisko (North Columbus) to visit individual meetings and speak with their teens. How Robb would accomplish this would be left to the discernment of the High School Teen Retreat Committee.

Mike Holaday (Grand Rapids) reported that the FGC New Meetings Project is progressing.

14 RM4.14 Ministry and Nurture Committee Report

Paula Deming reported for the committee.

Paula reminded the attenders that the spring Spiritual Formation Retreat will be hosted by Kalamazoo Monthly Meeting on Fifth Month 3rd. She then reported that Eric Evans, a Nurturing Ministries Associate from FGC, will be presenting at the Spiritual Formation Retreat this fall. This fall retreat will be held

Ninth Month 5-7 at the Colombiere Conference Center in Clarkston, MI. The spring retreat will be held May 2, 2015. The committee is considering a theme of "Experiments With Light" for this retreat.

Although it has begun the process, the committee has not yet been able to finish crafting a consolidated response to the Annual Query. The committee is still waiting for some responses. Paula read from some of the responses received to date.

Paula reported that a concern was brought to the presiding clerk concerning the safety and wellbeing of our children. The meeting approved that the Yearly Meeting clerk, in consultation with the clerk of Athens Monthly Meeting, the Ministry and Nurture Committee, and others with expertise form an *ad hoc* committee to work with Athens Meeting to determine how we will move forward with this concern at our Annual Session.

14 RM4.15 Peace Committee Report

Paul Helbling (Broadmead) reported on the Campaign Nonviolence national activities set to occur in September. The campaign was initiated by Pace e Bene (<http://paceebene.org>). He asked permission to disseminate information about the campaign through the LEYM communication network. He was given permission to do so and it was suggested he use the upcoming Bulletin issue.

14 RM4.16 Publications & Archives Report

The report was submitted by Joe Mills (Kalamazoo).

A. Annual Records

The *Annual Records* was out in November of 2013; final formatting, assembly and printing was much easier this year. Last year we used Office Max (whose principal business is sale of office products with a sideline of printing and copying). This year we used Fed EX – Kinkos whose main line of business includes printing and copying. Any Friend who has a strong connection with a printing firm should let the Committee know so it can explore using the firm.

Feedback on this year's *Annual Records* is welcomed as the Committee strives for improvement.

Les Walden will be next year's *Annual Records*' Editor

B. Bulletin

The Committee is mindful of its role in supporting the Bulletin Editor and wants to assure that submission of material for the Bulletin is made as easy as possible.

The Committee encourages the use of photos in the Bulletin. Les Walden is willing to travel afar to obtain photos that would support a story or article in the Bulletin as desired by the Editor. The Yearly Meeting's policy on the use of photographs would be followed.

14 RM4.17 Appreciations

Appreciation was given to Red Cedar for the hospitality shown the meeting. The following comments were shared.

The food was great!

Whoever made the muffins deserves blessings heaped upon him or her.

Thanks for arranging the sunshine. We've done without light long enough.

Thank you for the thought in developing this wonderful space.

The quality of the hospitality was outstanding.

I give much appreciation for the many options of gluten-free food.

I appreciate the beauty and simplicity of the building. It served our needs so well.

I wish you best wishes in becoming closer to the neighborhood.

I give appreciation for making the meetinghouse feel like a home.

I appreciate the shelves of fiction in the library here.

LAKE ERIE YEARLY MEETING MINUTES
REPRESENTATIVE MEETING 4/5/14

All the people who touched this building clearly left a blessing on the building and now we are blessing the building anew.

We appreciate Merry's hugs, making this meetinghouse truly feel like a home.

I appreciate Kathy Booth's work in making plenty of food for everyone to eat.

Thanks to Merry for making copies for the meeting.

I appreciate meeting for worship this morning and all the energy that was there.

I appreciate the sign that says "Capacity 299". I appreciate all the activity and diversity here. It is truly holy ground.