Minutes for the LEYM Executive Committee Meeting October 10, 2020

Please note, this meeting was held via Zoom to help prevent the spread of the Coronavirus.

Present: Thomas Taylor, Joann Neuroth, Tom Kangas, Joel Ottenbreit, Susan Loucks, Clemence Mershon, Rebecca Morehouse, Bill Warters, Peggy Daub, Jeff Cooper, Ellen Barnes, Jon Sommer, Christa White, Jo Posti (Clerk) and Kate Enger (Recording Clerk). Shelly Kotz sent word that she was unable to attend out due to health challenges in her family

Meeting opened with silent worship at 9:01 am. The Clerk then invited us to consider the following quote: “True godliness don't turn men out of the world but enables them to live better in it and excites their endeavours to mend it...Christians should keep the helm and guide the vessel to its port; not meanlly steal out at the stern of the world and leave those that are in it without a pilot to be driven by the fury of evil times upon the rock or sand of ruin.” - William Penn, 1682

EC20-10-1 Adult & Family Program report

Thomas Taylor reported that next year’s sessions are being planned in a virtual format, as there is no guarantee that it will be safe to meet in person. Paula Palmer is suggested as a plenary speaker, and her focus would be healing.

Ideas for themes include healing by facing the truth, healing while focusing on our frailties, and healing while addressing myths.

Specific plans and discussions of what can be learned from other meetings and conferences are pending.

The plan to hold the sessions virtually were **approved**.

The plan to invite Paula Palmer as the plenary speaker was applauded.

Thomas is willing to remain on as the clerk of the program committee, and he has good connections with Paula Palmer. He does wish us to keep an eye out in case he needs support due to health issues. Executive committee **approved** him to continue work as program committee clerk

Claire Cohen currently feels pulled in too many directions and needs to step away from the committee. Nominating committee will work on finding a replacement for her valued presence.

Report **accepted**

EC20-10-2 Finance Committee report

Joann Neuroth reports that the committee has informed monthly meetings by e-mail about their suggested per member contributions to LEYM.

The committee proposes to bring a policy recommendation to yearly sessions. It appears in bold below.

Currently IV. A. 4, ***Account Signatories***, reads,**“**The presiding clerk, treasurer, and clerk of the Finance Committee are signatories to all of the Yearly Meeting’s accounts with financial institutions and any one of them has the power and authority to withdraw funds.” Finance recommends adding another sentence, **“In addition, Finance Committee can nominate as signatory to our bank account(s) a Friend who resides near the bank.”**

An audit of last year’s financials was completed. According to Susan Hartman. Tom Kangas created a simplified, clear excel format that made the process “slick as a whistle.” There were no findings of concern.

The auditor asks how the digital records will be maintained for historical purposes, and the committee plans to consider this challenge. Peggy said that the report will be a part of the annual records. Ideally, they will also be on the website. Tom Kangas says that some of the details will not be available this way.

This year we only took contributions for LEYM. Finance committee will discuss how to handle the upcoming sessions.

Report **accepted**

EC20-10-3 Treasurer’s report

Please see appended report prepared by Tom Kangas

Planned donations to organizations have been made.

Tom is working on how to indicate in-kind donations.

Prepaid expenses in the form of down payments for sites to be used for retreats are held over so we do not lose sight of them, as they may be utilized next year.

During the first quarter of fiscal year 2020-21, we had some unusual costs due to the database conversion and the need for technology to support annual session. Some of the technology costs were covered by a technology grant from FWCC.

Friends expressed gratitude for the detail and clarity of Tom’s work on the report.

Report **accepted**

EC20-10-4 Peace and Social Concerns/Earthcare Interest Groups report

Joel Ottenbreit provided the following update on the work of the new LEYM interest group:

The LEYM Interest Group has been meeting virtually, using document sharing and emailing each other to develop the Peace and Justice/Earthcare Interest Group discussion forum.  There are currently four members of this interest group: Mey Hasbrook, Joann Neuroth, Richard Tucker and Joel Ottenbreit.

After working on this newly designed format for several months, the group decided to have four Zoom meetings in December (2020), February (2021), May (2021) and July (2021). The first session has been scheduled for Saturday, December 5, 2020 from 3:30-5:00 p.m.

A short video is in the final stages of development that will be sent out in mid-October to each monthly meeting describing this new type of programing.  The clerks of the monthly meetings will be asked to share this video with their members/attenders via email, at a business meeting or during announcements following their meetings for worship. The purpose of the video is to describe the discussion forum and to seek volunteer discussion leaders for each of the several breakout sessions. The topics for discussions related to peace and justice as well as earthcare will be based on the leaders’ proposals. The hope is that the interest group will receive four to six individuals to volunteer to lead the discussions by early November. Thanks to Joanne for writing the voice over script for the video.

The discussion topics will be listed on a dedicated webpage on the LEYM server. Monthly meeting members/attenders will be able to view the discussion topics and register for the sessions on the webpage. All those interested in participating will initially meet together briefly on Zoom before being placed in breakout rooms according to the topics they selected in advance. It has been suggested that the LEYM clerk highlight the services that LEYM has to offer its members in a short video to be viewed prior to the breakout sessions.

A tremendous level of gratitude must be given to Bill Warters.  Bill has developed a registration process and created a webpage link to enable the interest group to begin building a webpage for this new format.

Polling questions on Zoom and an email survey will be used to gain feedback from the participants.

Friends are encouraged to send feedback to the committee

The committee hopes to make a link available by late October in order to allow Friends to express interest in participation.

Report **accepted**

EC-20-10-5 Ad-Hoc Committee report

Susan Loucks provided the following report:

**LEYM Visioning Committee Report 10/7/20**

Work To Date:

**We articulated what we see as our charge:**

* Bring recommendations to the Yearly Meeting on practices and structures that foster a more vibrant, flexible, engaged, and Spirit-filled organization

**We considered what work we could best undertake in this charge.  Some of the ideas we considered were**:

* Establishing clear areas of focus
* Committee structure/identify best “committeeship” practices
* Generate ideas on what can provide deeper spiritual connections (generalized)
* Address question of a LEYM Faith & Practice
* Identify LEYM priorities
* Explore ways to support MM’s and MM clerks

**We asked ourselves what the best work was for a committee as opposed to a body, and ended up deciding that our work would be focused on the question** **“*What is our yearly meeting for*?”**

In support of this, we have developed interview questions for individuals and organizations (other YM’s and Quaker bodies) and are currently gathering information, with the intention of bringing recommendations to representative meeting.

Some early points to share from the undigested information include:

* Generational differences to consider in answering that question are influenced by different activism backgrounds and different ways of belonging, outside of MM membership
* YM’s as a place to be fed in ways that might not be possible in your MM - e.g. spiritually if your meeting is more focused on social change, or vice versa - and a place where your gifts can be recognized and used in ways that might not be possible in a small group.
* Social time, connections, and low-stakes conversations build muscle strength for higher stakes conversations.  How do we identify and leave time for higher-stakes conversations? One YM’s creation of an “open forum” as a way to create space for business that feels more vital and connective

Report **accepted**

EC20-10-6 Nominating Committee Report

Presented by Clemence Mershon

The committee asks the executive committee to approve John Deikis as LEYM as one of five representatives to FCNL. **Approved**

EC20-10-7 Ministry and Nurture

Becky Morehouse presented the following.

Interest in a clerk’s retreat has been expressed, and M and N is seeking clarification on who would take the lead in organizing one. In the past M and N has organized such a retreat, and Mathilda Navias or Merry Stanford may recollect specifics. Peggy recalls that someone was hired to organize a past retreat, though it may have been called a consultation.

Thanks to Bill for his work on the LEYM website. The committee requests a resources page where they can post information on guiding people who feel led to ministry and resources for dealing with interpersonal conflicts or difficult behaviors or situations in meetings.

Queries with a focus on race have been distributed to monthly meetings, and they are encouraged to give responses by January 15. The queries came from the epistle written by FGC pre-gathering for Friends of color.

State of the Meeting reports are requested from meetings and worship groups by May 15. Worship groups are encouraged to send their state of the meeting reports both to their monthly meetings and to the LEYM Ministry and Nurture committee.

Report **accepted**

EC20-10-8 Database conversion report brought forward by Jo

Working with Espen Shade consulting has been a delight. The new platform is much more user-friendly, robust, and customizable. The conversion is progressing well.

A question has been raised about recording ages in the database. We could assign generic birthdates that would allow data to be sorted. For example, data on children could be utilized for planning purposes if those young Friends have a birthdate that identifies them as being under 18 on the database. Christa expressed satisfaction with what resources we already have regarding the children.

The database includes a field that indicates if people have attended annual sessions. Do we want to include people who have attended annual sessions, but who are not part of LEYM? Annual Records already includes names of people who visit on behalf of an organization or meeting. Friends were unsure if they have been included on communications, like e-mails, outside of annual sessions. The Advancement and Outreach committee was asked to consider how to proceed with the new reality of virtual participation by more distant Friends in mind. We could simply ask visitors at registration if they wish to be on a mailing list.

At present, it appears that the funds budgeted for the conversion will be adequate.

**Status:**

1. Finished import of all contacts and households.
2. Walked through results and overall Salesforce setup with Jo and Lynda in a Zoom call on September 22.
3. Renamed Meetings to include WG, MM, QM or YM in the name.
4. Completed importing all Annual Sessions attendance.
5. On September 28, received approval from Salesforce.org for LEYM’s NPSP license.

**Next Steps:**

1. Continue to review results, make changes and fixes where needed.
2. Add Meeting contacts (Meeting Clerk as Primary Contact for each Meeting).
3. Create and populate YM and QM committees when that information is available.
4. Create any new reports or views as needed; work with Lynda on any questions or issues that arise.

**Current Issues:**

Espenshade Consulting would like to discuss the 5.5 remaining authorized hours to determine how we can best prioritize and address your needs in that time, or whether you might want to extend them. The discovery and migration phases are complete, and a number of views and reports have been created. Initial training occurred last week, so the remaining tasks from the proposal are any additional views, reports, training, or documentation that you would like. As mentioned in the proposal, we can also provide ongoing support on an hourly basis with no minimum or retainer.

As of 9/25/20, the project has used 24.5 out of the 30 hours authorized.

Report **accepted**

EC20-10-9 Website

Update from Bill Warters

The website was launched on World Quaker Day. The last update was 2011, so an update is much appreciated. It has been moved to our own server, and now allows plug-ins, which gives much more flexibility for adding features. The site is future-friendly, meaning it can be used on different sorts of devices, including phones. We have the capacity to do a great deal more with this site, such as adding more tools for virtual meetings and conversations.

Bill has been asked to publicize services available for a fee. He is asking who should be consulted and where we draw the line on what to post on the site or send out on the mailing list. Publications and Archives will discuss this further, and questions on future requests could go through them. Ideally, events would be considered by, and sponsored by, Monthly meetings. We may need a new policy in our policies and procedures regarding advertisements for events not sponsored by monthly meetings. Michigan Friends’ Center may also be a source of information on events, and we could provide a link to their site.

Our online schedule includes things like annual sessions and when reports are due. We have the option of putting up events hosted by monthly meetings. This idea was encouraged.

We have listings of where monthly meetings are held. Should that be updated to indicate if meetings are holding in-person gatherings at present? We could also include re-occurring Zoom links that are available, and we can do so without making those links overly accessible to bots. Bill will explore this option further. If monthly meetings are comfortable having their links posted, Bill is encouraged to do so.

Bill is seeking clarification on bulletin announcements and subscriptions, and what the differences are between the lists. Bill suggests meetings with Lynda Rose and the publications and archives committee to clarify how mailing lists have been used and to streamline the lists. We need to make sure additions to the lists are reflected on the database throughout the year.

Affiliations may be more fluid in this time of virtual meetings, and we may need to consider further how we determine membership with less of a focus on geography.

We are grateful to Bill for his work on this website.

Jeff commented that executive committee meeting minutes are meant to be published on the website, and that has not always happened. The clerks are encouraged to get them posted as soon as they are ready. The 2020 Annual Session epistle also needs to be posted.

Report **accepted**

EC20-10-10 Publications & Archives Committee

Presented by Peggy Daub

a)  The Annual Records volume is well under way, but its publication will be delayed because of the changeover in our data management.  When the company has completed the change from our old Access database to the new format, Lynda, our new database manager, will be able to send information to populate the latter part of Annual Records, including the Directory and information on monthly meetings.

b)  The fall Bulletin will be published in the next week to ten days.  We will send very few paper copies to meetings (no more than two each) unless we find out tomorrow that there are now meetings who are meeting in person again. Advice on whether meetings are gathering in person is appreciated.

c)  The ad hoc committee for updating *Policies and Procedures* has done a significant amount of work over the last year. Jeff’s institutional memory and knowledge of policies and procedures has been highly valued. We do not have a committee responsible for changes to policies and procedures beyond this ad hoc committee, and we likely need one. If publications and archives took this responsibility, they could confer with the committees most involved with any proposed changes. Their responsibilities for seeing that annual records are produced could provide a parallel for how policies and procedures are produced. However, this may over-burden publication and archives, and they can discuss whether they feel they could take on this added work. Some work is managed by other individuals, such as the bulletin editor, which may relieve the burden somewhat. Most changes are made, ultimately, at annual sessions. It’s important to consider that the visioning committee’s work may lead to significant changes to policies and procedures. One suggestion involved having another Friend work with Jeff so he can share his knowledge.

For now, it was suggested that our Clerk appoint one or more people to work with Jeff as we discern a longer-term plan.

Report **accepted**

EC20-10-11 Advancement and Outreach

Presented by Ellen Barnes

Progress on a social media advertising campaign has moved more slowly than the committee would like, but they continue to make it a priority. The committee still lacks a 6th member, and nominating committee will continue to seek a person with social media savvy to fill that role.

Report **accepted**

EC20-10-12 Arrangements and Site

Presented by Jon Sommer

Meeting virtually next year means less work for this committee, and more for Bill. The Arrangements and Site committee members are open to helping in other ways. Suggestions include working with information coming from the registrations and helping to organize facilitators for or serve as facilitators for online sessions.

Report **accepted**

EC20-10-13 Youth and Children’s Program

Presented by Christa White

Last annual sessions’ programs appeared to go well. The preschool through upper elementary kids all had a good time meeting face-to-face in Athens.

The fall retreat has been cancelled for public health reasons.

Ellerie Brownfain has expressed willingness to work with teen retreats, and Christa will reach out to her and to Noah Molina about being a teen liaison for the child and youth committee.

Jonah Brownfain continues to work on the Minecraft world for youth to share.

At present, there still isn’t an assistant clerk for the Children and Youth committee, and Christa would appreciate that support.

Report **accepted**

EC20-10-14 Other Business

Our clerk shared that she has been virtually visiting many different meetings, and wonders if we need to consider new policies regarding membership. Friends suggested that we consider how we encourage community and robust engagement within these different channels that are not physical.

There is value in meeting virtually with people that you already know, as you can enjoy the longevity and continuity of a relationship and a deeper understanding of them and their communication. This longer-term community allows us to see, and accept, our flaws.

Ministry and Nurture will consider these questions further.

Jeff suggested that we have our Executive Committee meeting the night before Representative Meeting so there is more time to engage with each other.

Clemence expressed her sense that our communication has improved considerably over the year, and she expresses gratitude to Jo for her work on addressing important issues and facilitating weekly virtual meetings during this challenging time.

Report **accepted**

Meeting rose at 12:29 after a period of silent worship