

Executive Committee Meeting Notes Saturday, August 7, 2021

Please note: this meeting was held via Zoom to help slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Attending: Susan Loucks (Clerk), Jo Posti (Assistant clerk), Kate Enger (Recording clerk), Jeff Cooper, Peggy Daub, Mike Holaday, Tom Kangas, Shelley Kotz, Becky Morehouse, Joann Neuroth, Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon, Jon Sommer, Sally Weaver Sommer, Bill Warters

Meeting settled into expectant worship at 10:03

EC21-8, 1 Agenda and discussion question: What do we see as the two most important tasks for our yearly meeting for the rest of the year coming away from Sessions?

A Friend expressed concern that participants at Annual Sessions were more focused on the social issues and workshops than on the meetings for worship with attention to business.

Worship is communion in the manner of Friends. A Friend in Bible study commented that focusing on people's faces is part of her worship. We need to be careful not to let technology interfere with our participation and connection.

Nothing came up for business that mattered to the world outside of LEYM. How do we bring the Peace & Social Justice and Earthcare issues present in our workshops into our yearly meeting focus? A renewed focus on important issues could help with outreach, too.

Our new *Annual Records* editor has not been attending Annual Meeting, so Jeff and Peggy are helping to make sure she has what she needs. Assuming meetinghouses will be hosting in-person meetings, they will be receiving larger quantities of LEYM publications again.

Friends are asked to keep in mind the need to revive our programs for youth, teens, and young adult Friends, especially in light of the lack of programming for young people at this year's Annual Sessions.

EC21-8, 2 Paula Palmer is asking if she can put the recording of her plenary on her own website, and Friends **approved** this request.

EC21-8, 3 Ministry & Nurture Committee reports that the annual query will go out in the fall with a request for responses by January. State of Meeting Reports are due in spring. M&N will also continue to host clerks' chats, with thanks to Mike Holaday, and possibly host more online Bible study. The Committee will support the Spiritual Formation planning group if needed. Ministry & Nurture Committee members are aware of spiritual companion groups and will help if needed. Some supports, like the clerks' chats, were the result of requests made by Friends. M&N plans to remain responsive to needs.

EC21-8, 4 Finance Committee reports working on a records retention policy. The draft of a plan for archiving finance records will be brought forward. Should we look at a more broadly applied records retention policy? Meeting worker and database manager may also have questions about how digital records are maintained. Passwords for social media accounts and other sensitive information that allows access needs to be stored in a centralized, secure manner, and passwords should be changed frequently. Concerns related to management of digital assets overlaps with the policy considerations Finance Committee is hoping to address.

Per-head assessments: Do we want to look at keeping assessments steady and decide collectively how to disburse any funds that accumulate? Disbursement would be a big responsibility that should be shouldered by more than the Finance Committee.

EC21-8, 5 Arrangements & Site Committee recommends that the Annual Sessions in 2022 be held at Bluffton University, if possible, with a hybrid element to include some online sessions. Our new clerk is not willing to clerk hybrid business sessions. If Bluffton is not available, we would hold sessions online again. Bluffton had good success with keeping a healthy campus last year. They are hoping to open to hosting conferences next year. Friends did express interest in being able to participate from other locations, including business sessions. Has Bluffton enhanced technology to help facilitate hybrid sessions? The plan to return to Bluffton for 2022 was **approved**.

Policies and Procedures states that decisions about meeting sites should be made two years in advance.

The Arrangements & Site Committee further recommends that an ad hoc committee be formed to address the question of alternative sites to Bluffton, because the current makeup of A&S is not suitable for this task. The membership of the ad hoc committee should include one person from each of the three states of the YM, someone from the children's program, someone from the adult program, at least one person from the current A&S committee, and one young adult Friend.

This ad hoc committee's considerations may include recent suggestions to host spin-off meetings in other locations simultaneously with virtual connections between those meetings. For example, the plenary could be hosted in Pittsburgh and people in Bluffton would see it digitally. Shouldn't the visioning process be connected to these site considerations? The plan to convene an ad hoc committee was **approved**.

A Friend did express concern that we are having difficulty staffing existing committees, and now we are looking at forming two new ad hoc committees and still need to work on implementing the recommendations of the visioning committee. The ad hoc committee work may lead us toward changes in our standard committees in the long run. Arrangements & Site, Youth & Children, and Adult & Family Program Committees need to work together going forward on our plans for future gatherings.

EC21-8, 6 Nominating Committee reports that people are still needed to serve on the Adult & Family Program Committee and the Advancement & Outreach Committee, and FGC representatives are still needed. Nominating Committee itself is made up largely of new people, two of whom are fairly new Friends. Nominating Committee plans to do some team building together before focusing on traditional work of the Committee, which is finding the Friends to do the work of the Meeting. Joe Mills (Kalamazoo) will be joining A & O. He may not fill our needs in regards to using technology to reach out to potential Friends. New Nominating Committee report approved, including Seth Reichenbach starting a second term on Finance Committee and Joe's addition to A&O was **approved**.

EC21-8, 7 The Technical Platform Advisory Committee plans to address data retention policies, tracking racial and ethnic data, and other considerations. Suggested committee members include the database manager and web worker, along with the registrar, clerk or assistant clerk, and committee clerks as led. The A&O clerk may be important to include as we focus more on online outreach. The Committee's work may drive policy decisions. The Committee would exist for a definite, limited time. Is this actually a working group rather than an ad hoc committee? Publications & Archives would advise about information that they need to do their work, but they would not be more actively involved. The clerks will name members of the Committee.

EC21-8, 8 Naming Committee is pleased to report that Sheila Johnson (Ann Arbor) is willing to serve on the Nominating Committee for a one-year term. Along with the other members approved at the recent Annual Sessions, her appointment will complete the Nominating Committee for the coming year. Sheila Johnson was approved to serve on Nominating Committee for one year.

The full committee is as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year of Service</u>	<u>End Year</u>
Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham)	6	2022
Sheila Johnson (Ann Arbor)	1	2022
Rick Adams (North Columbus)	1	2023
Winifred Covintree (Birmingham)	1	2023
Rachel Edwards (Pittsburgh)	1	2024
Mike Holaday (Grand Rapids) Clerk	4	2024

EC21-8, 9 How do we move forward some ideas and energy between now and October?

We are committed to making a recommendation about how to move ahead with Peace & Justice and Earthcare concerns. This year we had some success with observing Joel and others in leading and participating in interest group sessions. Quarterly interest groups sessions were successful in drawing 30–40 Friends together each time they met. Some Friends observed that these sessions generated more energy than committee work has in the past. Connecting people with similar interests across meetings is a key element of our work as a yearly meeting. A Friend underscored the importance of collaboration to foster a feeling of working forward toward themes which unite us as a yearly meeting.

We have an Earthcare Committee and Peace & Social Justice Committee, and they aren’t currently staffed. Those committees could continue the work done by the interest groups over the last year and forward cross-meeting connection. However, we need to respond to our current membership base, which doesn’t necessarily want to operate in the traditional committee structure. Some Friends would prefer to focus on specific tasks rather than a traditional committee commitment. Is the problem the perception of what it means to be on a committee? Could committee work focus more on specific tasks rather than a three-year commitment and provide more flexibility?

Do we need to reframe our request as reaching out to Friends who feel called to address peace and justice issues? Small groups who feel led to do so can facilitate important discussions. Can we identify Friends who are passionate about issues and ask them if they want to facilitate a series of discussions? Carolyn Lejuste, for example, is inspired to work on anti-racism. Richard Tucker and Mary Myers were suggested as Friends who could focus on an Earthcare perspective.

At present, our business meetings do not include a seasoning structure to facilitate and approve work done by these interest groups. How can we bring Peace & Social Justice and Earthcare interests to the Yearly Meeting business meetings?

More broadly, how can we build opportunities for adults and children to enjoy activities across meetings together? We need to provide scaffolding to support how to move that work forward. In time, Parenting, Bible Study, or other groups could also take advantage of the new structure. Could the Technical Platform Advisory Committee come up with a form that asks groups for information to help us discern whom we should provide a meeting space and time for (online)? Would a new interest group/task group structure encourage people to get groups together and do activities between meetings, including families and youth?

Some concern was expressed that we should use the new structure to be more focused on outward-focused activities, and children can be more inward-facing. How can we include the youth in the Peace & Social Justice and Earthcare activities?

Joann and Susan plan to look at how to move forward with providing scaffolding for ongoing Peace & Justice and Earthcare interest groups or committees. Mike commented that it's probably a good idea for Nominating to be connected with the newly created group to explore alternatives to traditional committee structure. He will broach the subject within the new Nominating Committee and see if anyone is led to do this work. If not, he will be glad to do it. This plan was **approved**.

EC21-8, 10 General information shared during the meeting:

Bill Warters is updating contact information for all of the Executive Committee. Please contact him if your preferences are different from those appearing on the website: LEYM Contact Information – Lake Erie Yearly Meeting

Bill needs an update on the Friends approved for Nominating Committee. [This is covered above, in minute 8.]

The October Executive Committee meeting will be on Saturday, October 23, for approximately four hours.

We moved into waiting worship, then participating Friends signed off at 11:57.