

## Minutes for the LEYM Executive Committee Meeting July 27 & August 11, 2022

*Both meetings were held via zoom to help curb the spread of the coronavirus*

### July 27 Session

Present: Susan Loucks (clerk), Jo Posti (assistant clerk), Kate Enger (recording clerk), Ellerie Brownfain, Jeff Cooper, Peggy Daub, Susan Hartman, Mike Holaday, Tom Kangas, Shelley Kotz, JoAnn Neuroth, Jon Sommer, Sally Weaver Sommer, Bill Warters

#### **EC22-7-1** Friends started with a Gathering and Centering exercise.

We considered the question, “what is one thing (thought, feeling) you’d love to have from sessions this year?” Responses included the following:

Clear vision for where we will be next year. What are our core activities?

Feeling re-connected.

Meet some new people.

Just enjoy being around Friends.

Enjoy this brief retreat from our everyday responsibilities to focus on Friends and Quaker process.

#### **EC22-7-2** Notes from April 2022 meeting.

Notes from last April’s executive session were sent out by e-mail in advance. They are **approved**.

#### **EC22-7-3** Meeting employees.

Both Bill Warters and Lynda Rose have agreed to stay on as meeting workers for another year with a slight increase in hours. They are also encouraged to bill for all the hours they work, as opposed to making an in-kind donation of time.

#### **EC22-7-4** Question of creating committee to consider our governance

We discussed creating an ad hoc committee for governance. Filling the nominating slate has been challenging, and we are not alone in struggling to find people to cover all needed positions. Faith-based and other organizations (such as FGC and other yearly meetings) are having similar difficulties.

Mike Holaday explained that there are about 108-112 positions described in our *Policies and Procedures* book, and we have about 600 adult members. That means 1 in 6 people must be willing to serve. In reality, we have not filled that entire slate for quite some time. For example, we do not have someone serving on the FGC central committee at present. Those who are serving are greying. Peace and Social Concerns and Earthcare committees have been changed into interest groups that focus more on specific presentations and projects. This has worked well, but it is not in line with *Policies and Procedures*. A small group of volunteers has been scheduling the groups, but their positions are not official at this time. An Ad Hoc group would be tasked with reconsidering Yearly Meeting governance and the positions currently listed in *Policies and Procedures*. Discussion touched on a variety of issues.

Keeping the kids connected throughout the year needs to be a priority. That may mean considering a position, possibly paid, for organizing youth activities throughout the year.

Is "governance" the right word? We are looking at what our basic work is, and how we can do it. "Governance" sounds controlling to some, but not to others. It can mean how we are organized as a body, and what value the yearly meeting provides for monthly meetings. Structure or organization may be more comfortable words but may not capture the idea of articulating how we do our work together.

We do not want to just ignore all the good work that has gone into *Policies and Procedures*. There is a lot of useful structure and information in that document already. Should *Policies and Procedures* become more of a living document? For example, it could go online and be more interactive. P and P should reflect where we are as a living, changing organization rather than dictating to us.

As we re-consider our procedures, we may want to keep in mind the idea of doing more of our business through the year rather than primarily during annual sessions. It is important to keep the work of the visioning committee in mind as we make choices.

Advancement and Outreach remains very important. At present, not much is happening. FGC may be a resource to connect us with other yearly meetings who are also looking at making adaptations so we can share ideas.

It would be helpful to have recommendations from the ad-hoc committee before representative meeting next April. We will follow up on the formation of an ad hoc committee for "governance" (or a somewhat different title) as the annual sessions progress.

#### **EC22-7-5** Observing patterns of oppression or faithfulness

Susan introduced the idea of watching for patterns of oppression or faithfulness in our group interactions. Susan went to a training on this strategy, and thought it had value. It can help a group correct any problematic patterns and recognize and strengthen faithful patterns. FGC uses "noticers" currently. New England Yearly Meeting also does this. They started with a small group and are progressing into broader involvement. For now, it may be best to have Ministry and Nurture look into how to apply a strategy like this effectively and positively before including more Friends or using the tool more broadly. Friends agreed that we need to cue this plan up in a careful way. At this time, EC members are encouraged to watch for patterns present in our interactions and bring those to the clerk's table between sessions.

#### **August 11 Session**

Present: Susan Loucks (clerk), Kate Enger (recording clerk), Ellerie Brownfain, Jeff Cooper, Peggy Daub, Flo Friender, Michael Holaday, Tom Kangas, Clemence Mershon, Joann Neuroth, Erika Smith, Jon Sommer, Sally Weaver Sommer, and Bill Warters

#### **EC22-8-1** The meeting started with centering silence followed by brief check-ins.

Friends were asked "What energized you in yearly meeting?" Answers included a sense of looking at the world from multiple points of view, having fun together, hearing the advice to "try it and see what happens" from our plenary speaker, and appreciation for the work of the Program Committee, who worked hard to find ways to keep us connected.

### **EC22-8-2 Discussion of Committee care**

The Advancement & Outreach Committee has dropped from two members to one; no one has come forward to serve as clerk. Friends were reminded that the Advancement & Outreach Committee supports meetings and worship groups in attracting and welcoming new members and attenders. It works with worship groups ready to become monthly meetings and with meetings wanting to become worship groups or be laid down. With the Publications & Archives Committee, the committee oversees the LEYM web site

Could Advancement and Outreach become an interest group like Peace and Social Concerns has? Executive Committee chose not to lay A & O down. Joe Mills will be asked for his thoughts on and whether he would be willing to serve as the core of an interest group, or to join Ministry & Nurture and support some outreach efforts. M & N could also offer support to new groups or those wishing to be laid down. The database manager is keeping up with the list of existing meetings.

### **EC22-8-3 Current Interest Groups**

Richard Tucker of Ann Arbor has volunteered to take on some of the work of the Earthcare interest group. It was suggested that Rick Adams of North Columbus had expressed interest in Peace & Social Justice as has David Fink of Oberlin, and either might be willing to work with Carolyn Lejuste and Joanne Neuroth, both of Red Cedar, on P&SJ. Joel Ottenbreit has worked on the website with Bill Warters and might be willing to do so again. Susan will check with Rick Adams and David Fink.

Bill Warters has set up a way to request that an interest group event be scheduled, and he can help with advertising it. <https://leym.org/events/> It seems like there is a grassroots infrastructure in place to keep the interest groups alive. A regular schedule may help.

### **EC22-8-4 Next steps in recommendations from Ad Hoc Site Committee**

We discussed addressing Ad Hoc Site Group recommendations, such as expanding programming throughout the year. Having committees give their reports outside of business meeting seems like a big change already. Handling some reports differently seems to have gone well. For example, the panels on Quaker organizations were very interesting, and more engaging for some Friends than the traditional reports during business sessions. This year did not feel business heavy.

More considerations include, what needs to be done in person? What can be done virtually? Could we move more toward having only the really deep discernment at annual sessions and other, simpler questions handled at other times? Let's not lose the good things we have going on as far as how we manage business. People verbalized being happy with it as it was this year. Susan will send out an invitation for a small group to discuss what might yet be innovated around conducting business throughout the year. The recommendations would be brought to representative meeting, and any changes would happen after July of 2023. Program committee will not need to take these ideas into their planning process for this coming year. For now, we are comfortable with letting the program committee get started and see how their plans for business meeting unfolds.

#### **EC22-8-5** Next steps in our anti-racism work

The clerk suggested the following as a process in considering anti-racism work following the YM session on that topic:

- A volunteer planning group could develop queries about that single (modest) topic and distribute them to MMs by early fall.
- Each MM could be asked to consider the queries and develop a written minute that reflects any BELIEFS or BEHAVIORS (i.e., FAITH and PRACTICE) about which we feel Spirit's guidance. By Feb 28, Meetings will circulate their minutes to other LEYM Meetings.
- Between March and June, Monthly Meetings could be asked to reflect on what they read from other Meetings to see what parts could be true for them as a group too. [Ask them to write again? Or just come having reflected??]
- We can reconvene at Annual Sessions 2023 to ask ourselves what parts of each other's minutes carry the life and breath of Spirit and are true for us as well. These could form the basis for something we can all say together about this topic.

Executive Committee members expressed support for the idea of monthly meetings wrestling with tasks/questions together and sharing thoughts and experiences. There was a suggestion that Ministry & Nurture either redefine or add to their query so that all Meetings were encouraged to think about their personal and corporate anti-racism work. It was also suggested that an additional query be sent to Meetings instead, encouraging them to send their findings and explorations to other meetings, perhaps by way of the website, as encouragement and support. Flo Friender, as Co-Clerk of M & N, indicated that M & N would be willing to assist with this addition to their responsibilities.

Could next year's Annual Session theme be open enough to support some activities related to anti-racism? Program Committee can be asked to consider something like "building the beloved community." Clemence Mershon reminded Friends that she and Greg Mott are the only Friends actively serving on Program Committee, and that help would be needed from other Friends to produce meaningful programming next year.

Such an important, challenging issue may be best addressed in an active manner, and with more time than we would normally give a query and to annual sessions. The work we do this year may lead to the beginnings of a statement that could go into our own *Faith and Practice*. Would it be better to start with a more bite-sized topic? Should Executive Committee shepherd this work through the year? Interest Groups can also target Anti-Racism topics.

**EC22-8-6** Susan Loucks reported that the next Executive Meeting will be sometime in October.

**EC22-8-7** Meeting closed with a brief period of worship.