

## **Minutes for the LEYM Executive Committee Meeting, March 10, 2023**

*This was a blended meeting, with some participants in person in Toledo, Ohio, and others attending via Zoom.*

Present: Susan Loucks (Pittsburgh), clerk; Flo Friender (Kalamazoo), acting recording clerk; Bill Warters (Birmingham), Joe Mills (Kalamazoo), Erika Smith (Detroit), Shelley Kotz (Broadmead), Mike Holaday (Grand Rapids), Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor), Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor), Joann Neuroth (Red Cedar), Sally Weaver Sommer (Broadmead), Tom Kangas (North Columbus), Clemence Ravacon Mershon (Erie Worship Group)

Guests: Linda Mills (Kalamazoo), Wink Covintree (Birmingham), Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham), Linda Szilagye (Broadmead), Amy Heritage (Broadmead), Barbara LeSage (North Columbus)

**EC23-3-1** Meeting opened with worship.

**EC23-3-2** Minutes from the Executive Committee meeting of January 7, 2023, were reviewed. Corrections: 1) the list of attenders should include Clemence Ravacon Mershon; 2) the deadline, not the release date, for Spring Bulletin submissions is the middle of March; 3) "Sally Weaver Sommer will check with Bluffton" to be replaced by: "Shelley Kotz will see if the Victory Center in Toledo is available for Representative's Meeting; Sally Weaver Sommer will check if Broadmead Meeting can support this gathering." 4) changing references to "annual sessions" to "annual meeting." Susan Loucks will send the corrected document to Peggy. **Approved** as corrected.

**EC23-3-3** Susan Loucks asked for news to share about what is happening in the Yearly Meeting at tomorrow's meeting. Updates included:

Bill Warters – a three-part online series on digital issues awareness, including Cyber security

Erika Smith – the fall youth retreat

Joann Neuroth – Spiritual Companionship

Ellerie Brownfain – Spiritual Formation

Mike Holaday – Nominating will share needs

Tom Kangas – finances

Clemence Mershon – workshops for LEYM and other Program Committee news

Sally Weaver Sommer – Arrangements & Site information

**EC23-3-4** Susan reported that she has invited people to serve as a Naming Committee but doesn't have confirmations yet. She will ask for our approval via email when she has names of those willing to serve.

**EC23-3-5** Flo Friender brought a request from the Ministry & Nurture Committee to consider monthly meeting responses to the annual queries we send to them. So far this year, only 11 of the 20+ monthly meetings have responded. This is a problem as the final document does not then accurately reflect the thinking of all the meetings in LEYM. How can M&N better engage meetings in this effort? Shelley Kotz added that the reflections given in the State of the Meeting Reports from monthly meetings give M&N a start in formulating the queries. There is a very short turn-around time for the committee between receiving the State of Meeting Reports and Annual Meeting.

Members of the Executive Committee were asked “How do we see the value of the answers to the queries? How do they advance the work of the Yearly Meeting?” and shared thoughts about what might make this exercise more fruitful and/or enlivening, including:

- Meetings might be more excited if they understood the purpose of the queries, or if they reflected what the meetings themselves were concerned about. How does information flow back to them?
- It could be helpful to tie in the query with the theme of the annual meeting.
- The queries provide a place where we can all think about the same thing at the same time.
- One meeting puts answering the query on their Meeting Calendar for the same Sunday every year.
- How can the query best help us be relevant to monthly meetings?
- What purpose are the queries serving – both for the YM and MM’s? Are there other ways we might accomplish that work more successfully?
- Some Meetings feel disconnected from Yearly Meeting. Queries need not be a burden but a service to the monthly meeting. Can we make them a gift rather than an ask?
- In earlier times queries were a form of discipline to meetings, reminding them of responsibilities. (E.g., Are we singing too much?)
- Asking at the Clerks’ Chats as to what meetings are concerned with.
- There might be a time for many monthly meetings to reflect on the query together on zoom.
- It is important for meetings to do the work on queries locally, themselves – meetings decide what is important. Joint time for reflection could potentially follow local work.
- The State of the Meetings Reports get confused with the queries. Both need to be done in a similar timeframe.
- A request was made to M&N to send out to the executive committee a list of meetings not yet answering, so we can prompt those in our own meetings.
- The State of Meeting Reports is meant to be the Spiritual State of the Meeting.
- To get meetings to respond, it would be helpful to be specific as to purpose. M&N could consider this and make it more plainly known.

**EC23-3-6** Susan described the schedule for the Representative Meeting. The morning will be spent in conversations, the afternoon will be the Business Meeting.

**EC23-3-7** The group considered together how we might increase interest in LEYM’s annual meeting. Suggestions included:

- Posters, generated by Bill Warters to take home to meetings
- Interest Groups – get excitement generated to take to home meetings
- Mailing list – LEYM representatives of Meetings, not just the clerks
- A good article for the *Bulletin*
- Write up articles for meeting newsletters about your best experience at YM
- Free registration or other discount for new people
- Talk about the ice cream
- Spiritual connection to other Quakers
- Make new friends
- Encourage people to bring something important to share memories about
- Personal connections

- Living non violently
- Think of it as a good family reunion with relatives you want to meet
- Tee shirt design contest
- What would it take to remove the reasons that prevent you from coming” Problem solve with them
- Put on registration Need a Ride? Can Provide a ride?
- We need your gifts
- Experience a new environment

Another question for discussion might be where do we go from here with the topical interest groups?

- Interest groups – try to line up workshops with the theme of the yearly meeting
- Some workshops don’t fit the theme – might evolve as interest groups

Mike Holaday asked if we might find ways to clarify the roles of meeting representatives to LEYM and the roles of LEYM appointees to other Quaker bodies. Despite being defined in *Policies and Procedures*, they are not well understood. It was agreed to seek other ways to pursue this, such as an article in the *Bulletin*.

**EC23-3-8 Susan** asked if there are any decisions expected tomorrow.

Mike Holaday suggested that in future we may want to make permanent the new committee structures that have arisen over the last few years, especially the practice of using fewer officially appointed committee members and more drop-in volunteers. The Nominating Committee is not yet ready to make a recommendation. Executive Committee finds they too are not ready to recommend such a change. More information is needed, including what exactly P&P (Policies & Procedures) says about the practice of visitors to committees. A Friend suggested we not lose track of our Advancement & Outreach Committee as we consider changes.

**EC23-3-9** Meeting closed with grateful worship.