

LEYM Executive Committee Minutes

September 6, 2025

Present: Jack Smith (Clerk), Peggy Daub (Recording Clerk), Claire Cohen (Peace & Justice), Jeff Cooper (Publications & Archives), Flo Friender (Ministry & Nurture), Dennis Gregg (Ministry & Nurture), Susan Hartman (Advancement & Outreach), Tom Kangas (Treasurer), Barbara LeSage (Advancement & Outreach), Carolyn Lejuste (Arrangements & Site), Joann Neuroth (Finance), Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon (Adult & Family Program, Nominating), Bill Wartens (Digital Communications Facilitator)

Present for discussion of #7, Collecting Information from Meetings: Susan Loucks (Pittsburgh)

The Executive Committee of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting gathered in worship on Zoom at 9:30 am on Saturday, September 6, 2025.

1. Planning Representative Meeting

Clerk Jack Smith (Red Cedar) contacted all our monthly meetings to gather information on their schedules for business meetings so that Representative Meeting would not conflict with them. There is one Saturday in March that is not followed by business meeting for any of our monthly meetings: March 28, 2026. Friends present were asked to consider that date and let Jack know of any conflicts. Friends considered several potential locations in the western part of the Yearly Meeting area and supported hosting it in Michigan, if possible. Among needs mentioned: space for small groups to meet as well as the larger body, hospitality from Friends, provision of meals, and availability of space for Executive Committee to meet the night before. We **agreed** that our Clerk should pursue the question.

2. Treasurer's Report: Tom Kangas (North Columbus) reported.

- a. The financial report on our Annual Meeting was published in the Fall *LEYM Bulletin*. It showed a modest subsidy from the General Fund was needed to pay our expenses.
- b. Tom shared a report on our current financial position. His report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, showed some differences from the preliminary report presented at our Annual Meeting. It includes both dividend payments and the market value deriving from funds deposited with the Friends Fiduciary Fund (FFF).
- c. Tom's third report showed where we are financially as of September 5, 2025. All transfers to and from the General Fund are now completed.

(The financial reports are attached.)

A Friend questioned the practice of showing change in the market value of money in FFF as income, since it represents potential, rather than actual, gain. This is how we have been reporting it for some time, but Tom recognized that it is also valid to represent this value in reports differently and will investigate other possibilities.

3. Organizational Changes in Friends General Conference: Jack Smith reported.

Jack described some changes going forward in FGC:

- ** Executive Committee will be laid down and a Governing Board raised up

- ** Central Committee will be laid down and a Representative Council raised up

The Representative Council will be large, 48 to 72 people. We expect to be permitted to send two representatives to serve on the Council.

Dennis Gregg (Ann Arbor) said he believes that the changes are being driven by a desire for increased accountability in financial matters. Jack thought that the Governing Board might hold this accountability in the new organization.

Our Nominating Committee has found it difficult to find Friends to serve as our representatives to FGC Central Committee in recent years. Those appointed in earlier years sometimes stay on beyond their appointed term, accepting service on committees that report to Central Committee. Thus, there are some LEYM Friends who are on Central Committee but not formally our representatives. We wondered if these LEYM Friends, as well as those appointed to serve on committees for AFSC and FCNL after their terms as LEYM representatives have ended, still hold some responsibility to function as representatives from our yearly meeting.

Carolyn Lejuste (Red Cedar) observed that the Central Committee has not been effective in recent years and sees the new structure as a way of inviting people to be more involved.

Jack can forward slides to us from a listening session about the reorganization. Jack and Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham) plan to attend the meeting of Central Committee in late October, when the plan will be discussed further. A question arose of whether Brad Shaw's term on Central Committee had expired or not. Jack will check.

We were in **unity** in asking the Nominating Committee to begin to explore LEYM representation to FGC's new Representative Council.

4. Peace and Justice Committee: Claire Cohen (Pittsburgh) reported.

Rick Thomas (Ann Arbor) is the only other member of the Committee, following Phil Volk's unexpected death in July. Claire has wondered about laying down the Committee but finds she is drawn to help discern if LEYM or its constituent meetings are led to support the statement on Gaza already endorsed by a number of Quaker groups ("Quakers Discern Genocide is Occurring in Gaza and Urge Courageous Action"). If Claire finds other Friends to work on this subject with her, she will then see if they are led to stay and serve on the Committee.

Claire asked members of Executive Committee to contact her if they have names of Friends who might work with her to discern how to support the statement on Gaza.

5. Membership on the Executive Committee email list. Jack reported.

Jack noted that Bill Wartens, Digital Communications Facilitator, is included on the list, but Susan Loucks, Database Manager, is not. We understand that the Clerk is able to invite Friends to attend and participate in any meeting, as agenda items necessitate. We agreed to let the Clerk

discern who is needed on the email list, recognizing that at times the *Bulletin* Editor or clerks of ad hoc committees might be added.

6. Executive Committee serving as Assistant Clerk.

Jack asked if anyone felt led to take responsibility for choosing and reading Epistles from other organizations during our business meetings. This is the main task the Assistant Clerk has in preparation for the Annual Meeting. Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon (Erie WG) volunteered to do this if needed in January and March/April. Others will consider this further. An ad could be placed in the *Bulletin* or distributed by email asking for a volunteer.

7. What Information to Collect from our Constituent Meetings. Discussion

Susan Loucks (Pittsburgh), Database Manager, joined for this discussion. Jack began by reading how the minutes from our Executive Committee meeting on June 15, 2025, recorded discussion of this topic. There were two main points: should the times of business meetings for monthly meetings be added to the *Annual Records* and should we try to maintain records for all our members in the LEYM database?

a. Should we add the time for business meetings at each monthly meeting? After collecting it himself, Jack found that information helpful in determining potential dates for our upcoming Representative Meeting. Susan said she already collects this information for the LEYM database, but it isn't printed in the *Annual Records*.

We **agreed** that the Database Manager should continue to collect the times business meetings are normally held by our constituent monthly meetings and print them in the *2026 Annual Records*. [Ed.: After this meeting, the P&A Committee found that they could include it in the *2025 Annual Records*.]

b. Should we maintain records for all members of our meetings in the LEYM database? We believe historians are interested in this information, but our database wasn't designed to be a historical record and instead is meant to provide support for our lines of communication. Since LEYM has a paid database manager who keeps the records when our monthly meetings do not, it would seem natural for the Yearly Meeting to take on this responsibility. There are differences in how meetings use various categories of membership, and we may need to accept whatever we are sent, even when it is inconsistent. Friends are aware of inaccuracies in their local records.

Susan was asked to describe what we do now, and she said that she requested full directories from monthly meetings last fall but didn't hear from anyone. In the spring, she sent people full lists of the people in their meeting communities and asked for corrections.

We could ask Susan to send snapshots of data to our archive at Swarthmore periodically, which would serve as a record for historians. A Friend was concerned about sharing personal information of people without their knowledge and wondered if we should ask the archive to keep some of our records closed. Are we willing and able to take full information from our monthly meetings and keep it as an historical record? We **agreed** to refer this matter to the

Publications & Archives Committee for seasoning and discernment. Jack will write a charge to that Committee and ask for a report by January.

8. Advancement & Outreach Committee. Susan Hartman (Ann Arbor) reported.

The slide show describing LEYM has been updated and is available to be shared in visits to our meetings. Friends can reach out to the A&O Committee or the Ministry & Nurture Committee to schedule a visit and showing. A&O has planned online discussions for October and November. They are intended to serve as role models for monthly meetings to show how such discussions might also be arranged locally. Jack suggested a future topic might be relations of Meetings with their unhoused neighbors.

9. Ministry & Nurture Committee. Flo Friender (Kalamazoo) reported.

The Committee will organize “clerks’ chats” for clerks of local Ministry committees while also continuing such chats for presiding clerks of monthly meetings. The Committee is discerning a query for the year. The Committee is considering a request for LEYM to sponsor a clerking workshop.

10. Program Committee. Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon (Erie WG) reported.

There is a tentative topic for next year’s Annual Sessions: “Hope, Joy, Community.” The plenary speaker will be Joe Volk, former Executive Secretary of FCNL.

11. Publications & Archives Committee. Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor) reported.

Progress on the *Annual Records* for 2025 is proceeding well. They should be mailed in late September or early October. There will be a redacted version (without the Directory) available online again this year.

12. Digital Communications Facilitator. Bill Warters (Birmingham) reported.

Bill has updated links to other organizations and publications on our website.

13. Meeting in January.

Members of the Executive Committee were asked to hold the date of Saturday, January 17, 2026, for a meeting if need arises.

The meeting ended at 11:55 am.